

COUNTY CONNECTION



CLICK HERE
to tell us what you think
about County Connection,
Marion County's Official
News Source.

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 5 • DECEMBER 2009

In this Issue

- Letter from LeePage 1
- Behind the Scenes
UtilitiesPage 2
- Employee Spotlight ...Page 2
- Best-kept SecretPage 3
- Commission Corner Page 4
- Newsflash.....Pages 5-7
- In Case You
Missed It.....Page 8
- Did You Know?.....Page 8
- Ask/Advise the
Marion County
AdministratorPage 8
- Pets of the MonthPage 8
- Calendar of Events...Pages 9-10

Marion County Commissioners

- Mike Amsden, District 1
- Jim Payton, District 2
- Stan McClain, Vice Chair, District 3
- Barbara Fitos, Chair, District 4
- Charlie Stone, District 5

Marion County Administrator

Dr. Lee A. Niblock

County Connection Team

Executive Editor

Heather Danenhowser

Marion County
Office of Public Information

Managing Editor

Christy L. Jergens

Marion County
Office of Public Information

Copy Editors

Jessica Briand

Marion County Veterans Services

Elaine Delorio

Marion County Animal Services

Sharan Reif

Marion County

Public Safety Communications

LETTER FROM LEE

Our Communication Compass



Openness and easy access to information provide the foundation of American democracy, so when I became County Administrator in February, I set out to accomplish an enormous task: improve internal and external communication.

To reach this goal, I expanded the Marion County Office of Public Information using in-house resources, established an internal team to manage various activities and provided a communication compass, such as benchmarks, to keep us focused. The idea: enhance customer service by vigorously and proactively disseminating information about Marion County's services, initiatives and policies to better inform and empower the public.

That was just six months ago. Now, with the end of the year nearing, I've had the chance to reflect on what we've accomplished. Today, I present to you our communication report card. I'm proud to say that we have met all of our communication benchmarks on time, and in many cases, the team has exceeded my expectations.

Did we make the grade?

- ✓ Formed the Marion County SOURCE Committee to create and manage various communication initiatives.
- ✓ Implemented this countywide e-publication to serve as an important information artery for all of our stakeholders. We launched this e-publication one month early and automatically sent it to nearly 3,500 e-mail inboxes each month. How would you rate County Connection? Please tell us by filling out the e-survey posted at the top of this page. Your feedback is invaluable to us.
- ✓ Developed a new mission statement and guiding principles for Marion County government as shown at the bottom of this page. We took a bottom-up instead of top-down approach when creating these to help staff feel ownership in the messages. We hope this effort will empower and motivate employees, provide employees direction and focus and ensure consistency and unity of Marion County's mission and core values.

✓ Adopted a Marketing Communication Handbook. Marion County serves a diverse community, and various groups have different expectations of county government. Therefore, a one-size-fits-all approach to communication cannot effectively serve the citizens. This 75-page handbook, the first of its kind for Marion, addresses the five methods of proven marketing communication strategies by defining Marion County's market, mission, messages, mediums and measurements. [Click here](#) to download Marion County's Marketing Communication Handbook.

✓ Created Marion County's first Media and Public Information Handbook to ensure media inquires and public records requests are processed consistently and uniformly. This handbook will ensure accurate, clear and comprehensive release of information with a united voice as well as enhance the credibility and reliability of Marion County's messages.

✓ Started a re-branding effort. What is re-branding you might ask? Re-branding entails designing a new logo to represent Marion County, so citizens can better identify Marion County's initiatives and messages. We believe this effort will significantly improve our customer service, consistency and credibility. More importantly, this project will save taxpayer money. (I thought you'd like that.) We'll have more on this topic in future editions.

Though I restructured the Marion County Office of Public Information just six months ago, we've made incredible progress. However, we also know that our work has just begun. We will continue our efforts to improve internal and external communication with a whole new slate of objectives to tackle in 2010.

If I don't see you, please have a safe and prosperous holiday and New Year.

You may reach Marion County Administrator Dr. Lee A. Niblock at 352-438-2300 or lee.niblock@marioncountyfl.org

Mission Statement

Marion County provides professional and resourceful public services for our citizens through strategic planning and cost-effective implementation of county initiatives, generating positive results that set the standard for quality local government.

Our philosophy is built on:

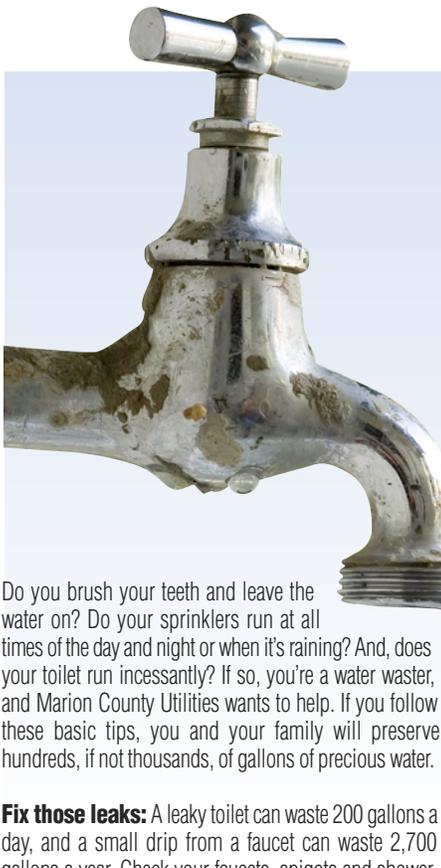
- Providing responsive and effective customer service that addresses the diverse needs of all citizens.
- Facilitating open and honest communication that encourages citizen participation.
- Ensuring excellent stewardship and accountability of public funds, while upholding the highest legal and ethical standards.
- Accepting responsibility for our actions and working toward continuous improvement.
- Encouraging sustainable growth and revitalization, while preserving Marion County's historic charm, natural resources and quality of life.
- Maintaining a professional work environment that promotes leadership development, empowers employees and encourages partnerships with stakeholders.

Behind the Scenes

MARION COUNTY UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

Water Wasters Learn to Conserve

By Nia Haynes, Marion County Utilities



Do you brush your teeth and leave the water on? Do your sprinklers run at all times of the day and night or when it's raining? And, does your toilet run incessantly? If so, you're a water waster, and Marion County Utilities wants to help. If you follow these basic tips, you and your family will preserve hundreds, if not thousands, of gallons of precious water.

Fix those leaks: A leaky toilet can waste 200 gallons a day, and a small drip from a faucet can waste 2,700 gallons a year. Check your faucets, spigots and showerheads regularly to ensure they are working properly.

Invest in efficiency: The next time you plan to do bathroom or kitchen renovations, consider buying high-efficiency appliances. Toilets built prior to 1994 use three gallons per flush or more. Modern toilets use as little as 1.28 gallons per flush. Washing machines can use approximately 40 gallons a load. Upgrading to a high-efficiency front loader washing machine can save 25 gallons of water per load.

Consider retrofitting: If you're like most of us and don't have the cash to spend on overhauling your whole house, consider retrofitting your existing appliances. This is a cost-efficient and easy way to save water. In just a few minutes, you can install faucet aerators that can help reduce flow to about 1.5 gallons per minute as opposed to the 2.5 gallons per minute average. You can also install a toilet fill diverter, dam or toilet tummy to reduce how much water goes down the drain with each flush. In the shower, low-flow showerheads can reduce water rates from eight gallons per minute down to two. With today's plumbing technology, you won't notice a difference in water pressure.

Be mindful of daily consumption: Turn the water off while brushing your teeth. Consider shortening your shower time. Run your dishwasher or washing machine only when you have a full load. Small changes garner large results in these areas.

Think about outside usage: When it comes to the outdoors, don't water your driveway. Make sure sprinkler heads face the right direction, and use a blower or broom to get rid of leaves and debris instead of the water hose. Remember to stay present when using your hose and put a nozzle on it. A water hose can release 30 gallons of water a minute. This means that a hose left unattended for just one hour can waste 1,800 gallons of water.

Water landscaping only on the approved days: In May 2009, Marion County Commissioners approved an inter-local agreement with the St. Johns River Water Management District and the Southwest Florida Water Management District that updated Marion County's Water Conservation and Landscape Irrigation Ordinance below.

For more information about the ordinance and water conservation, visit www.marioncountyfl.org or call Nia Haynes, Water Conservation Coordinator, at 352-671-8791.

TIME OF YEAR	HOMES WITH ODD-NUMBERED OR NO ADDRESSES	HOMES WITH EVEN-NUMBERED ADDRESSES	NON-RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES
Eastern Standard Time (Fall/Winter)	Saturday	Sunday	Tuesday
Daylight Saving Time (Spring/Summer)	Wednesday/Saturday	Thursday/Sunday	Tuesday/Friday

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

By Nia Haynes, Marion County Utilities Department and Elaine Deloria, Marion County Animal Services

Utilities Minded – Flip Mellinger



Efficiency. Progress. Expansion. These are all words that describe new Utilities Director Flip Mellinger's plans, some already in the works. In October, Mellinger, former Assistant Utilities Director, took the helm of Marion County Utilities, replacing Andy Neff, who resigned in June 2009. In his new position, Mellinger will maintain and upgrade the existing infrastructure and lead Marion County in designing long term solutions for the future of Marion County Utilities.

Mellinger has 28 years of experience in utilities management, a Bachelor's degree in Business Management, a Master's degree in Business Administration and is currently pursuing a second Master's degree in Environmental Management.

Mellinger hopes to improve his department's customer service, save tax dollars and encourage citizens to conserve water during his tenure with the department. He will direct and maintain the infrastructure for Marion County Utilities to ensure that water, wastewater and reuse water are provided to protect public health and comply with regulatory and environmental requirements.

His short- and long-term goals include:

- Upgrading the online bill-pay system.
- Automating the meter-reading system, which will save tax dollars and enable utility workers to more easily find leaks.
- Installing Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition systems in each upgraded water treatment plant or lift station to allow utility workers to monitor these facilities remotely.

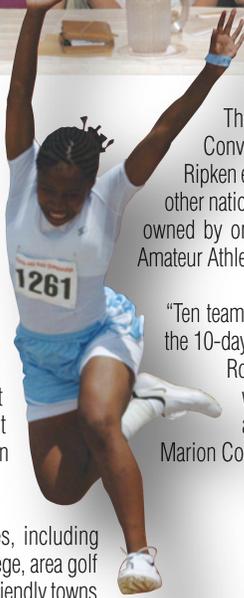
Mellinger started serving Marion County in 2005.

Best-kept Secret: Marion County becoming Sports Mecca

By Heather Danenhower, Marion County Office of Public Information



Marion County is known for its rolling hills, horse farms and vast forests. But, it's also gaining esteem on the pitcher's mound and the putting green. Marion is becoming a sports Mecca, attracting a large variety of state, regional and national athletic events that are generating millions annually in direct visitor spending. "Our county's centralized location, easy access to and from I-75 and affordable hotel rates are selling points that our office highlights when working with event organizers," said Matthew Dunn, Tourist Development Manager of the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau.



The Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau estimates that hosting the Cal Ripken event will provide the needed exposure to host other national caliber baseball and softball tournaments owned by organizations such as Triple Crown and the Amateur Athletic Union among others.

"Ten teams from across the country will participate in the 10-day event," said Jeff Salamone, President of the Rotary Sportsplex. "The kids and their families will stay in our hotels, eat in our restaurants and visit the many wonderful places to see in Marion County. This is a big deal for our community."

Indeed, Marion County offers many venues, including locations at Central Florida Community College, area golf courses, Marion County's parks and sports-friendly towns such as Belleview, Dunnellon and Ocala. Marion County also offers visitors opportunities for hiking, biking, kayaking, camping, horseback riding and fun at several local attractions such as Silver Springs, Wild Waters Water Park and the Appleton Museum of Art.

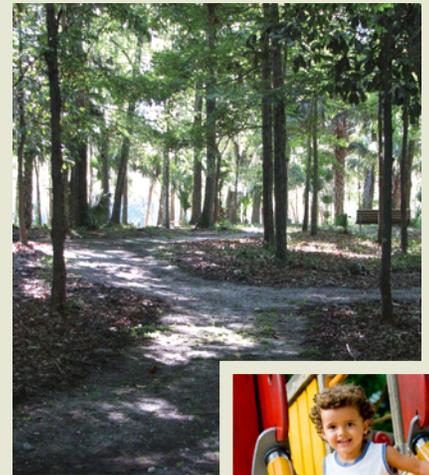
The most recent development in Marion County sports was on Oct. 20 when the Rotary Sportsplex Board signed an official contract bringing the Cal Ripken World Series to Marion County in 2010.

"Marion County hosted the Cal Ripken Southeast Regional tournament over the summer," said Gina Peebles, Director of Marion County Parks and Recreation. "So, when the original Cal Ripken World Series host-state backed out unexpectedly, organizers turned to Marion County."



Brick City Adventure Park: THE PLACE TO EXPLORE

By Jim Couillard, Marion County Parks and Recreation Department



Marion County's Brick City Adventure Park isn't all about swings and slides. Sure, it has play units, but the Marion County Parks and Recreation Department had special challenges when working with this location. Park designers wanted to build a better park with as a little money as possible, preserve the natural environment and re-engage citizens with nature and the outdoors.

Marion County Parks and Recreation assumed operations of Brick City Adventure Park in 2008, during a difficult financial time. But promoting outdoor play without breaking the budget proved possible.

Parks and Recreation workers noticed children were playing in the wooded area of the park and not just on the actual play units. The wooded area was heavily overgrown, though, which presented visibility and safety problems.

So Parks and Recreation workers cleared out the underbrush and continued with minimal maintenance so children could have a safe, natural place to explore. New play units, including climbing apparatuses and agility stations, are scheduled for installation in mid-June. Future additions include high ropes courses, wall climbing and other activities, which fit the park's adventure theme.

COMMISSION CORNER

By Heather Danenhower, Marion County Office of Public Information and Christy Jergens, Marion County Office of Public Information



Commissioners From L to R: Vice Chair Stan McClain, Mike Amsden, Jim Payton, Chair Barbara Fitos and Charlie Stone

Board appoints new chair and vice chair: Fitos takes the gavel and McClain to serve as vice chair



A new voice is now leading the Marion County Board of County Commissioners as Commissioner Barbara Fitos became the board's chairperson on Nov. 17, 2009. Though she is the first female to serve in this role since Judy Johnson in 1994, Fitos' gender is not the first thing that most people notice. Instead, many notice her leadership, good

listening skills and ability to build consensus. Some even say she has changed the dynamic of the county commission.

Fitos said she will focus her attention on job creation, sustainability, protecting and conserving Marion's water resources and communication over the next year. Ultimately, she hopes to change some perceptions. "I want people to feel that we are leveling with them," she said. "It's not just a sound bite here or an edited quote there. I want people to get a sense of who we really are." Who "we" are, she said, is accessible, approachable and here to listen.

In fact, Fitos said one of her favorite duties is hosting monthly town hall meetings in her district and listening to citizens' concerns. "That is the real joy," she said. "We can sometimes make an immediate impact by doing small things that don't cost a lot of money."

Though many challenges are complex, Fitos feels that Marion County faces a crucial tipping point. "I'm an optimist and think we'll tip in the right direction," she said. "We've already accomplished so much. We've done major studies on infrastructure and economic impact. We've reframed our comprehensive plans to determine how we will grow, and we've engaged in municipal, regional and statewide dialogue with our partners. The greatest challenge will be changing mindsets and perceptions. That can take a long time, but we do not have the luxury of waiting. We need to move forward; we need to take action."

Citizens elected Fitos, who has lived in Marion County for more than 30 years, to the board in 2006.

Commissioner Stan McClain will join Fitos as vice chairman of the board. The Transportation Planning Organization also appointed McClain as its new chair. Effective Jan. 26, 2010,



McClain will replace current TPO chair City Councilwoman Mary Sue Rich. The TPO is composed of local elected officials from Marion County, Ocala, Belleview and Dunnellon. The TPO is responsible for transportation planning throughout the community, including highways and transit as well as bicycling and pedestrian facilities.

Pilot partnership to put people back to work

Marion County Commissioners want to help Marion County citizens find jobs and address Marion County's 13 percent unemployment rate – that's why they've partnered with Workforce Connection and the Florida Department of Children and Families to initiate a pilot subsidized employment plan. As a result, Workforce Connection will hire 27 temporary employees to work on various Marion County projects. These employees are expected to start work the week of Dec. 7, 2009.

As part of the program, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the DCF will provide 80 percent of the total cost of employment to Workforce Connection. Marion County will pay the remaining 20 percent, or \$95,000. That means Marion County will receive labor at 20-cents on the dollar.

The 27 temporary employees will work on previously budgeted Marion County projects for the Parks and Recreation and Facilities Management departments. Their duties will range from assisting with maintaining parks' natural resources to assisting with the renovation of the Silver Springs Library and Fire Rescue Logistics building.

The positions are temporary because the federal funding is expected to expire in September 2010.

This subsidized employment project is just one of many plans that the Marion County Economic Action Team is tackling. That team is composed of local, state and federal elected officials; city and county representatives; economic development professionals and many other community and business organizations.

Marion County to provide Ocala's animal control service

Marion County Animal Services is now providing animal control services for City of Ocala residents as part of a cost-saving consolidation effort between the county and the city. Marion County Commissioners unanimously approved the inter-local agreement on Oct. 21, 2009. The City of Ocala Council approved the inter-local agreement on Oct. 6, 2009.

Marion County Commissioners and City of Ocala council members first discussed this consolidation at a joint city/county public meeting on Feb. 2, 2009. As part of the transition, the City of Ocala will pay Marion County the following over the next three years: \$150,000 during the 2009-2010 fiscal year, \$125,000 for the 2010-2011 fiscal year and \$100,000 for the 2011-2012 fiscal year. Marion County will invest \$172,732 in start-up costs to ensure a smooth transition. Both governmental agencies believe this transition will ultimately save taxpayer money.

Marion County Animal Services is responsible for shelter operations, field operations and spay/neuter services as well as investigating animal nuisance, animal cruelty and aggressive animal cases. Marion County will provide these same services to City of Ocala residents.

If citizens have questions or animal control complaints, they should contact Marion County Animal Services at 352-671-8727 or visit www.marioncountyfl.org.



NEWSFLASH

Stop, Think and **BE SAFE** THIS HOLIDAY

By Miranda Iglesias, Marion County Fire Rescue



The holidays are filled with shopping, cooking, cleaning, decorating and celebrating a multitude of events. And in the frenzy, you may easily forget basic holiday safety. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, fire deaths, injuries and property losses increase by as much as 61 percent between Dec. 24 and Dec. 26. That's why Marion County Fire Rescue firefighters recommend that you follow the below tips to keep yourself and your family safe this holiday.

Holiday Cooking

- Cooking is one of the main causes of house fires in the U.S.; never leave cooking unattended.
- Never throw water on a grease fire; the water will spread the fire, not extinguish it.
- Turn pot handles in and away from a child's reach.
- Keep holiday decorations and other kitchen clutter away from the heat of the stove.
- Never overload electrical outlets and remember to unplug appliances when not in use.
- Keep an "ABC" approved fire extinguisher in the kitchen, and make sure it's charged and working properly. Most importantly, know how to use it.

Holiday Decorations

- Make sure your Christmas tree is fresh; shedding needles is a sign of a dry tree.
- Keep your tree moist by placing it in a stand that holds water and discard your tree immediately following the holidays.
- Make sure artificial trees are flame-retardant.
- Never smoke or hang flammable decorations near your tree.
- Never put a tree in front of an exit.
- Buy electric lights that are approved by a national testing lab and look for the "UL" tag.
- Discard old lights, and use indoor or outdoor lights only in their designated locations.
- Always unplug lights before going to bed.
- Keep candles in a sturdy holder away from curtains, children and pets.
- Avoid hanging stockings near an open flame.

Winter Warnings

- Never burn paper in a fireplace; this is a major cause of chimney fires.
- If you haven't done so already, hire a professional to clean your chimney and have it cleaned every year.
- Soak stove and fireplace ashes in a metal pail for at least 24 hours before disposing them.
- Hire a professional to service your furnace once a year and install an emergency shut-off switch.
- Keep space heaters out of halls and away from doors, stairs, children and pets.

Keep your four-legged friends safe too

- Lilies, amaryllis and many other common holiday or household plants are toxic to pets. Place plants out of the reach of pets.
- While holiday décor is pretty, pets may sometimes try to experience the holidays for themselves by chewing on ornaments, wrapping paper or strands of lights. Monitor your pets while they are around holiday decorations.
- Make sure your pet sticks to its normal food during the holidays. Human food, especially when it's of the rich, holiday variety, can make pets sick.

Improved flood insurance rating could save homeowners money

By Richard Martin, Marion County Growth Management and Heather Danenhower, Marion County Office of Public Information

Marion County is showing its class. The Marion County Zoning Division recently worked with the Insurance Services Office (ISO) to improve Marion County's flood insurance rating from a "class nine" to a "class seven." The new rating took effect on Oct. 1 and could save citizens up to 15 percent on their flood insurance premiums depending on the insurance policy. If citizens have questions about Marion's improved rating, they should call the Marion County Zoning Division at 352-438-2675 or visit in person at 2710 E. Silver Springs Blvd. in Ocala.

AID AVAILABLE TO MARION'S MOST VULNERABLE

By Jim Simon, Marion County Community Services

Job losses coupled with the declining real estate market have put many families in a position they never thought they'd be in – facing homelessness. Recently, Marion County received more than \$727,000 in federal stimulus money that is slated specifically to help Marion County's at risk residents by either preventing homelessness or helping displaced residents become rapidly re-housed.

The Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program stimulus funds came to the Marion County Board of County Commissioners through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The HPRR program aims to provide much-needed services, such as rent or utility assistance, to prevent imminent homelessness. The program also provides Marion County residents who now find themselves homeless with the security deposits necessary to attain rental housing.

The Marion County Homeless Council, as lead agency for the local Homeless Continuum of Care, will administer the program's funds in the community. The Homeless Council expects 450 people to apply to receive the emergency funds. Applicants must be Marion County residents.

To see if you qualify for services through the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program, call Marion County's "First Call for Help" at 352-732-4444.

A Journey Through TIME

By Heather Danenhower, Marion County Office of Public Information

What does the future hold 50 years from now, and what will the day's people think of Marion County and its leaders of long-ago? Maybe you'll be eligible for Social Security or be a great-grandmother for the fifth time. Or, maybe you'll join the centurions club like today's Onie Ponder. Whatever the future brings, one thing is clear: Marion County leaders have left a treasure for future generations to find.

Buried about four feet underground in a large metal box at the new entrance to the Marion County Judicial Center is a piece of living history. As part of a recent ceremony to commemorate the near completion of the Judicial Center, community leaders buried two time capsules: one from 1991 and the second from today. The 2009 time capsule included Marion County's "Doing More with Less" plan; an iPod with music, videos and photos; business cards from community leaders with one-liners describing life 50 years from now; and local publications among other items.

The Judicial Center is expected to open in early 2010. Crews built the current Marion County Courthouse and Clerk's Office in 1962 and then expanded it into a Judicial Center in 1991.

When the Marion County Judicial Center first expanded in 1991, only six circuit judges and three county judges served in the 146,500 square foot building. Now, 11 circuit judges and four county judges use the facility. Rapid growth prompted the construction of the five-story, 150,000 square foot expansion project, which includes five additional courtrooms, new arraignment and jury



assembly areas that can accommodate 500 people, judges' chambers, administrative offices and secured parking areas.

Commissioners budgeted \$42 million for the project, and the project started in October 2007. Because Marion County Facilities Management is following process improvement value-engineering practices, the project is currently \$1 million under budget.

Moss Construction employed an average of 200 local workers over an 18 month period to stimulate the local economy.

MARION COUNTY VETERANS SERVICES Wins State Award

By Jessica Briand, Marion County Veterans Services and Heather Danenhower, Marion County Office of Public Information



More than 46,000 veterans call Marion County home, and when these men and women need help obtaining their much-deserved Veterans Administration benefits, an eight-person team at Marion County Veterans Services can help, free of charge. They can help veterans apply for healthcare, education, widow and burial benefits as well as home and small business loans. They can even assist veterans with filling-out forms to replace coveted lost awards, such as a Purple Heart or Bronze Star.

The Florida Veterans of Foreign Wars recently recognized the hard work and dedication of Marion County Veterans Services, presenting the department with the 2009 Service Office of the Year award in the large county category. "This award symbolizes our dedication and service to the men and women who served in the United States Armed Forces," said Jeffrey Askew, Director, Marion County Veterans Services. "We are here because they were there. Their sacrifices will not be forgotten."

Marion County Veterans Services is a department of the Marion County Board of County Commissioners that has helped veterans receive more than \$91 million in new and reoccurring VA compensation, pension and education benefits in the last year alone. If veterans or their family members have questions about their benefits, they should call 352-671-8422 or visit in person at 2528 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala (located next to the Marion County Public Library Services Headquarters-Ocala).

Shortly after receiving the state award on Nov. 3, Askew won an individual award for outstanding service to veterans at the Marion County Veterans Helping Veterans breakfast on Nov. 13, 2009.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS HONORS

Middle-School Hero

By Peveeta Persaud, Marion County Fire Rescue and Sharan Reif, Public Safety Communications



Michelle Hernandez didn't know the incredible task that was ahead of her when she called 911 on Saturday, Sept. 12, 2009. Her mother was about to deliver a baby, and Michelle would have to help.

Michelle, a sixth grade student at The Villages Charter Middle School, followed the detailed instructions that Marion County Public Safety Dispatchers Donna Redner and Brian Tucker provided. Michelle acted as a liaison between the dispatchers and her mother, translating the



questions and responses from English to Spanish and vice versa.

Throughout it all, Michelle never lost her composure or her good manners, despite being in a very stressful situation. She remained calm until Marion County Fire Rescue crews arrived. Michelle's bravery helped her mom deliver a baby girl, Abigail, at 8:15 a.m.

Though they were in constant communication throughout the delivery, the dispatchers didn't get an opportunity to meet the middle school hero until they were reunited at a recent commission meeting. While at the meeting, Public Safety Communications staff and commissioners commended Michelle for her bravery and presented her with a certificate of recognition.

PSA CONTEST TO PROMOTE Protection of Water Resources

By Barbra Hernández, Marion County Office of the County Engineer

The Marion County Office of the County Engineer has launched a public service announcement contest to engage Marion County's middle and high school students and teach citizens how to best protect Marion's water resources.

Marion County's first Stormwater PSA contest is open to middle and high school media production students attending a public, private or home school in Marion

County. The contest will award two awards to the 30-second commercials that most creatively and effectively encourage citizens to prevent stormwater pollution.

The Marion County Office of the County Engineer will feature the winning PSAs in local television or movie screens in the spring as part of the county's ongoing stormwater pollution prevention campaign.

Participants must submit their entries by Dec. 18, 2009 to the Marion County Office of the County Engineer. For contest rules and guidelines, visit www.marioncountyfl.org or call 352-671-8364.

Holiday Helpers DRESSED IN BUNKER GEAR

By Miranda Iglesias, Marion County Fire Rescue



For more than 10 years, Marion County Fire Rescue firefighters have helped meet the needs of families throughout Marion County as part of the department's annual Holiday Helpers toy and clothing drive. This year is no different. From now until Dec. 18, MCFR will collect toys, jackets and other warm clothing for children of all ages (newborn to teen) as well as non-perishable food. Firefighters will accept only new and unwrapped items and pre-identify the most vulnerable families with help from local schools.

Citizens can drop off items at MCFR Headquarters (2631 SE Third St.) or at 24 of Marion County's full-time fire stations.

DICK NELSON RECOGNIZED FOR ACHIEVEMENTS

By Sharan Reif, Public Safety Communications

When people think of 911, many think about Dick Nelson, a visionary who left an incredible mark on Marion County.



Marion County didn't have 911 service until 1989, and Nelson was responsible for building the system. This took years of hard work, patience and meticulous organization and planning.

At a recent commission meeting, Nelson joined his former 911 team members and received a proclamation recognizing the 20th anniversary of Enhanced 911 in Marion County as well as a certificate of appreciation honoring his dedication and commitment.

Nelson retired in February 2007 after 20 years of service.

IN CASE YOU Missed It!

Compiled By Christy Jergens, Marion County Office of Public Information

4-H turns 100

4-H celebrated its 100th anniversary in Marion County this year. Extension Service, 4-H members and the public celebrated with a picnic at the 4-H youth farm on Baseline Road.



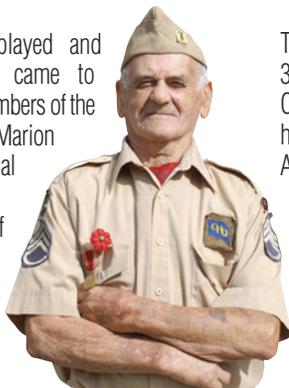
Marion employees raise money for the United Way



Marion County employees held their annual Jamboree Day in November and raised \$5,612.45 in a single day to benefit the United Way of Marion County.

Veterans celebrate Veterans Day

Flags waved, horns played and veterans and citizens came to remember and honor members of the armed forces. The Ocala/Marion County Veterans Memorial Park hosted multiple activities in celebration of the Third Annual Week of Remembrance and Veterans Day.



Coming together to save lives

The beating hearts and pounding feet of more than 3,000 Marion County residents came together in October to fight against our nation's deadliest killer, heart disease. More than 130 teams partnered with the American Heart Association, raising \$255,000. Marion County government teams contributed \$8,000 to the total amount raised for the 5K heart walk.

Ask / Advise County Administrator

You asked, and now we're answering.

Compiled By Jeannie Rickman, Marion County Office of Strategic Services

On Marion County's Web site, www.marioncountyfl.org, citizens can "Ask/Advise" the County Administrator. Citizens have asked this question, and we're pleased to answer.

Q: I want to review an ordinance adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. Where do I find it?

A: To locate any board-adopted ordinance, visit Marion County's Web site, www.marioncountyfl.org. Click on the tab titled "I Want to" then scroll down to the link that reads "Find County Code of Ordinance." This will link you the home page for the Municode library. Lastly, type your key word into the "Search" box for the ordinance you'd like to read.

Did You? KNOW?

- Marion County Facilities inspects approximately 900 fire extinguishers every month to make sure they are filled and working properly.
- Citizens of all ages checked out more than 1.4 million books and materials from Marion County's libraries during the last fiscal year.
- The Veterans Services building once housed the Florida Highway Patrol, and the current employee break room used to be the holding cell.

PETS OF THE MONTH

Compiled By Elaine Delorio, Marion County Animal Services



Harley

Harley (ID # MCAC 160435A), a 4-year-old male Doberman Pincher mix, loves company and dreams of a friend to play ball, walk or just spend time with him. Are you that perfect future best friend for this lonely boy?



William

Though his fur is as gray as a cloudy sky, **William** (ID# C-2009-7806) will brighten your day, no matter the weather. This lively 7 to 8-year-old male domestic shorthair cat can't wait for you to come and take him home.

The adoption fee for either Harley or William is only \$40 and includes the animal's spay/neuter surgery, county license, current vaccinations and microchip. Call Marion County Animal Services at 352-671-8700 for more information or visit the department Tuesday – Friday from 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. or Saturday from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Calendar of Marion County Events

Compiled by Sharan Reif, Marion County Public Safety Communications and Elizabeth Leger, Marion County Public Safety Communications

December 2009

Marion County Animal Services

Dec. 4	12 – 1:30 p.m.	WVWG Dog Adoptions	1101 Main St., The Villages
Dec. 5	10 a.m. – 2 p.m.	Cat Adoptions at PetSmart	534 N. U.S. Highway 441, Lady Lake
Dec. 11	12 – 1:30 p.m.	WVWG Dog Adoptions	1101 Main St., The Villages
Dec. 12	10 a.m. – 2 p.m.	Pet Adoptions at PetSmart	534 N. U.S. Highway 441, Lady Lake
Dec. 12	10 a.m. – 2 p.m.	Pet Adoptions at PetSmart	3500 SW College Road, Ocala
Dec. 18	12 – 1:30 p.m.	WVWG Dog Adoptions	1101 Main St., The Villages
Dec. 19	10 a.m. – 2 p.m.	Cat Adoptions at PetSmart	534 N. U.S. Highway 441, Lady Lake

Board of County Commissioners

Dec. 1	9 a.m.	County Commission Meeting	601 SE 25th Ave., Commission Auditorium
Dec. 1	10 a.m.	Public Hearing: First Cycle Large Scale Comprehensive Plan Amendments	601 SE 25th Ave., Commission Auditorium
Dec. 9	9 a.m. – 12 p.m.	Public Hearing: Second Cycle Large Scale Comprehensive Plan Amendment Adoption	601 SE 25th Ave., Commission Auditorium
Dec. 10	10 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Marion County Blood Drive Florida's Blood Centers	McPherson Governmental Complex Tax Collector's parking lot
Dec. 15	9 a.m.	County Commission Meeting	601 SE 25th Ave., Commission Auditorium
Dec. 16	9 a.m. – 12 p.m.	Workshop: Findings of Silver Springs Regional Water Quality Report, Utilities Master Plan, City and County Utility Options	601 SE 25th Ave., Commission Auditorium
Dec. 22	4 p.m.	Ocala/Marion County Transportation Planning Organization Meeting	601 SE 25th Ave., Commission Auditorium

Marion County Extension Service

(Some events may require pre-orders or registration; please call 352- 671-8400 for more information.)

Dec. 2-4	8 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Annual 4-H Holiday Bake Sale	County Extension Auditorium
Dec. 3	10:30 a.m.	Holiday Plants	Belleview Library
Dec. 5		4-H Horse Show Contact: Kevin Yutani 352-351-9557	Southeastern Livestock Pavilion
Dec. 9	10:30 – 11:30 a.m.	Eating Healthy on a Budget	Dunnellon Public Library
Dec. 12		Florida Horse Sale Contact: Pat Sanders 352-544-0170	Southeastern Livestock Pavilion
Dec. 18		Agricultural Hall of Fame 2010 Deadline	County Extension Service

Marion County Public Library

Dec. 3 – 17	1 – 3 p.m.	Free Computer Help (Adults)	Headquarters – Ocala Library
Dec. 3	10:30 a.m.	Holiday Plants (Adults)	Belleview Public Library
Dec. 5	10:30 a.m.	Holiday Party with Santa (All Ages)	Belleview Public Library
Dec. 5	2 – 3 p.m.	Holiday Party and Magic Show (Grades: K-Sixth)	Marion Oaks Public Library
Dec. 8	12 p.m.	Brown Bag Luncheon (Adults)	Reddick Public Library
Dec. 9	10:30 a.m.	Eating Healthy on a Budget (Adults)	Dunnellon Public Library
Dec. 9	2 p.m.	Family Flix	Belleview Public Library
Dec. 9	2:30 p.m.	Kids Club (K-Six)	Forest Public Library
Dec. 12	2 p.m.	Gingerbread House Make n' Take (Grades: Preschool – Sixth)	Headquarters – Ocala Library
Dec. 15	6 p.m.	Pajama Party! (Grades: K-Sixth)	Freedom Public Library
Dec. 17	3 p.m.	Light Up the Library! (All Ages)	Freedom Public Library
Dec. 18	2 p.m.	Dance Divinity with the Victoria Dance Studio	Dunnellon Public Library
Dec. 18, 21, 22, 23	2 p.m.	Winter Break Movie Matinee (All Ages)	Forest Public Library

*Event dates and times are subject to change without notice.

Calendar of Events

Marion County
(Continued)

December 2009

Dec. 19	3 p.m.	Saturday Movie	Dunnellon Public Library
Dec. 21	2 p.m.	Create a Reindeer Gift Bag (Grades: Preschool – Sixth)	Headquarters – Ocala Library
Dec. 22	2 p.m.	Construction Zone (Grades: Preschool – Sixth)	Headquarters – Ocala Library
Dec. 22	2 p.m.	Tech for Tweens: MakeBeliefsComix	Dunnellon Public Library
Dec. 23	2 p.m.	Movie Time (Grades: Preschool – Sixth)	Headquarters – Ocala Library
Dec. 28, 29, 30	2 – 4 p.m.	Wii and Board Games (Grades K-6)	Headquarters – Ocala Library
Dec. 29	2 p.m.	Tech for Tweens: MakeBeliefsComix	Dunnellon Public Library
Dec. 30	2 p.m.	The Wednesday Matinees (All Ages)	Ft. McCoy Public Library
Dec. 31	2 p.m.	Magical New Year's Eve with Brian LaPalma (All Ages)	Headquarters – Ocala Library

Marion County Parks and Recreation

(Programs may require pre-registration and a small fee; please call 352-671-8560 for more information.)

Dec. 2	9 – 9:30 a.m. 10 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Preschool P.E. Home-school P.E. and Art Program	Brick City Adventure Park Brick City Adventure Park
Dec. 3	10 a.m.	Kayak and Koffee	Rainbow River
Dec. 4	9:30 a.m.	Kayak Outings for Adults	Rainbow River
Dec. 5	9 a.m. – 2 p.m.	Basic Wild Caving Experience (Ages 16+)	Brick City Adventure Park
	9:30 a.m.	Bird and Nature Walks	Carney Island
	10 a.m.	Art Van-Go	Baseline Trailhead
	12 p.m.	Art Van-Go	Liberty Community Park
Dec. 5	2 p.m.	Art Van-Go	Wrigley Fields
Dec. 7	10 a.m.	Brunch with the Elves (For Preschoolers)	Liberty Community Park
Dec. 8	10 a.m.	Brunch with the Elves (For Preschoolers)	Wrigley Fields
Dec. 9	9 – 9:30 a.m. 10 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Preschool P.E. Home-school P.E. and Art Program	Brick City Adventure Park Brick City Adventure Park
Dec. 10	10 a.m.	Brunch with the Elves (For Preschoolers)	Baseline Road Trailhead
Dec. 11	6 – 9:30 p.m.	Friday Fun Nights – Parents' Night Out	Brick City Adventure Park
Dec. 12	10 – 11:30 a.m.	Geocaching – Equipment Options	Brick City Adventure Park
Dec. 12 – 13		Overnight Kayak Campout	Ocklawaha River
Dec. 16	9 – 9:30 a.m.	Preschool PE	Brick City Adventure Park
Dec. 16	10 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Home-school P.E. and Art Program	Brick City Adventure Park
Dec. 17	10 a.m.	Kayak and Koffee	Silver River
Dec. 18	6 – 9:30 p.m.	Friday Fun Nights – Parents' Night Out	Brick City Adventure Park
Dec. 19	9:30 a.m.	Kayak Outings for Adults	Silver River
Dec. 21 – 23		Outdoor Adventure Camp (Ages 12-16)	Brick City Adventure Park
Dec. 22	9 a.m. – 12 p.m.	Marshall Swamp Interpretive Hike	Marshall Swamp
Dec. 23	9 – 9:30 a.m. 10 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Preschool P.E. Home-school P.E. and Art Program	Brick City Adventure Park Brick City Adventure Park
Dec. 28 – 30		Outdoor Adventure Camp (Ages 6 - 11)	Brick City Adventure Park
Dec. 30	9 – 9:30 a.m. 10 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Preschool P.E. Home-school P.E. and Art Program	Brick City Adventure Park Brick City Adventure Park

All Marion County offices will close on Friday, Dec. 25 for the Christmas holiday and on Friday, Jan. 1 for the New Year holiday.

*Event dates and times are subject to change without notice.

▶ To submit a Marion County Government sponsored event, e-mail Sharan Reif at sharan.reif@marioncountyfl.org.

Please include the following information:

- Date of event.
- Time of event.
- Name of event and target audience.
- Location of event, including numeric address.