



COUNTY CONNECTION

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 8 • AUGUST 2014

TOP STORY

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Marion County Commissioners
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Kathy Bryant, District 2
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Carl Zalak III, Chairman, District 4
Earl Arnett, District 5

Marion County Administrator
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NOTICE

BCC
2nd
August
meeting
date
change:
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for details.

BUDGET *Time*

By Barbra Hernández, APR

Patching potholes. Hosting library programs. Driving ambulances to emergencies. Marion County government provides these and many other services to nearly 335,000 residents each year. And every year the Marion County Board of County Commissioners and its 25 departments and offices are tasked with planning how these services will be budgeted for and funded into the future.

Read below to find out three things you need to know now about the FY 2014-15 budgeting process.

It's a year-round effort.

During the months building up to the budget workshops and public hearings, all departments review their operations and plan cost-efficient strategies to present to the County Commission in the form of proposed budgets. Current economic conditions and multiple financial factors are also considered. Come July, the board considers the proposals and guides the budget conversation into the month of September, where public hearings are held prior to adoption of a final budget.

It's a lot of numbers.

The County Commission is not only tasked with reviewing the proposed budgets from its 25 departments and offices, but also from Marion County's five constitutional offices (Marion County Clerk of the Court, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Marion County Property Appraiser, Marion County Tax Collector's Office and Marion County Supervisor of Elections).

It takes a village.

The budgeting process for local government is not complete without citizen input, and every Marion County resident has multiple opportunities to review and comment on the proposed budget until final adoption.

Get involved – here's how:

Review the proposed budget:

Visit the Marion County Clerk of the Court's website (www.marioncountyclerk.org) or click [here](#) to access the proposed FY 2014-15 budget.

Attend a public hearing:

Public hearings to consider the proposed FY 2014-15 countywide budget will be held at 7 p.m. on Sept. 11 and Sept. 25, 2014 in the McPherson Complex Auditorium (601 SE 25th Ave., Ocala). For more information, please contact the commission office at 352-438-2323.

DID YOU KNOW?

Property taxes make up about **18 percent** of the Marion County government budget (based on FY 2013-14).

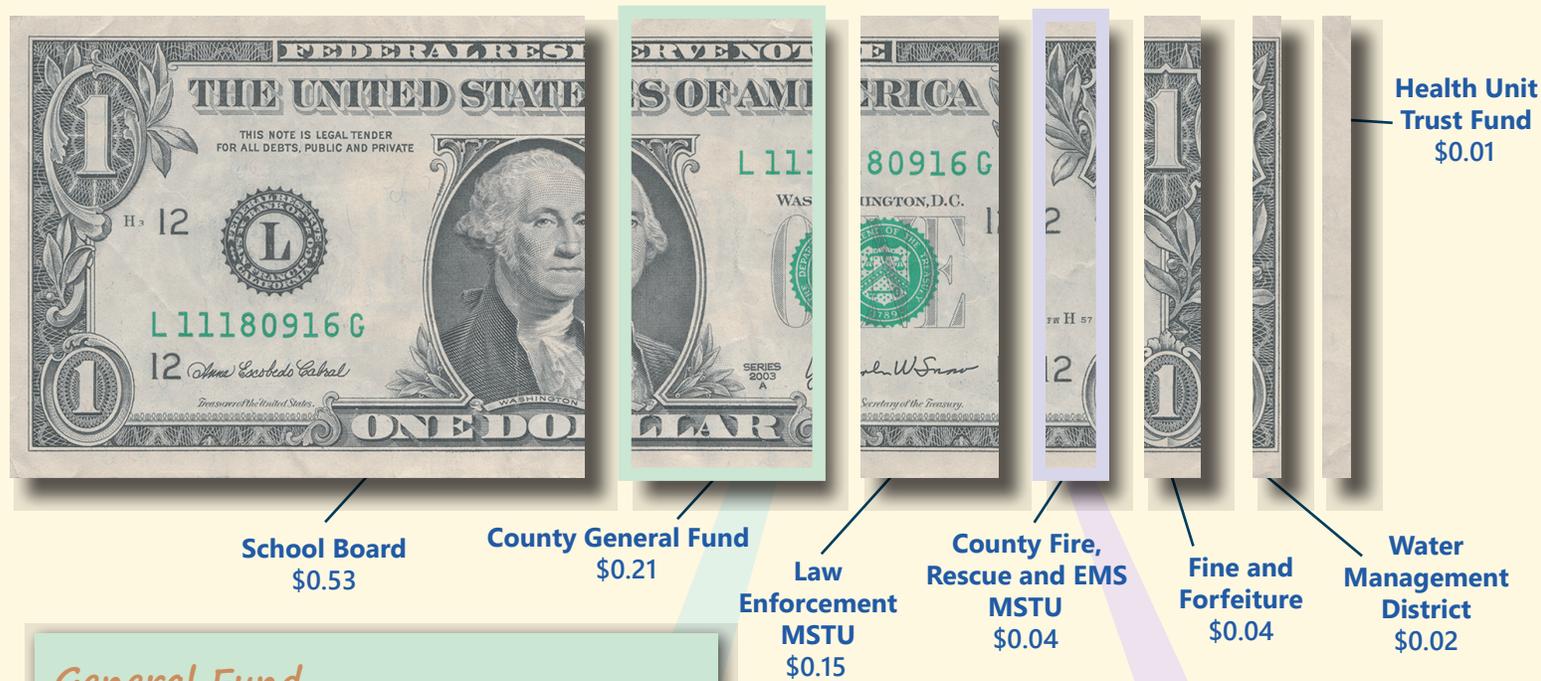


Turn to page 2 to learn how each property tax dollar is divided and how much actually goes to fund Marion County government programs.

Where do my **property taxes** go?

Below is a representation of how each property tax dollar is divided for property owners in the unincorporated areas of Marion County*.

(This does not include MSTU/MSBU** assessments within specific subdivisions or residential areas.)



General Fund

This funds the programs and services provided by Marion County departments, including: emergency medical services, public safety communications (911), animal services, parks, facilities management, libraries, veterans services, growth services (code enforcement, planning, zoning), administration, extension services (such as 4-H), procurement, community services, fleet management and more.

The general fund also includes the funding for four Marion County constitutional offices (Clerk of the Court, Property Appraiser, Supervisor of Elections and Tax Collector), as well as for jail operation and emergency management services managed by the Marion County Sheriff's Office.

Fire, Rescue and EMS MSTU

This is a Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU) paid by property owners in the unincorporated areas for fire rescue services.



Property owners in unincorporated Marion pay only **\$0.25 per property tax dollar** for all of the **countywide services** provided by Marion County Board of County Commissioners departments. Examples of those services are highlighted in the green and purple boxes.

All other property tax funds are overseen by separate entities, as follows:

Marion County School Board - School Board funds

Marion County Sheriff's Office - Law Enforcement MSTU and Fine and Forfeiture funds

Southwest Florida/St. Johns River water management districts - Water Management District funds

Florida Department of Health - Health Unit Trust Fund

**MSTU/MSBU=Municipal Service Taxing Unit and Municipal Service Benefit Unit

* Based on FY 2013-14

For more information, please contact Marion County Office of Fiscal Review at 352-438-2300.

NEWSFLASH

MCFR partners with community to curtail fall injuries

By Jessica Greene

Falling is a concern most of us don't have unless we're hiking along a rocky road, climbing a ladder or tackling a long flight of stairs. However, for a growing percentage of the nation's population, fear of falling is a cause of distress.

Cammy Dennis, fitness director for On Top of the World Communities, has known about this issue for quite some time. Six years ago, she began developing presentations to help residents in the retirement community understand the risk factors associated with falling. She didn't stop there, though. Dennis also developed exercise classes that combine balance, posture and strengthening elements from fitness disciplines such as strength training, yoga and Tai Chi. "We've seen the difference this program makes in both a person's strength and their confidence. It can be life changing," Dennis said.

Until recently, a person had to be an On Top of the World (OTOW) resident to participate in the Big Balance Theory® classes and seminars that were held within the community's borders. However, OTOW executives granted MCFR permission to work in conjunction with OTOW fitness professionals to bring the Big Balance Theory® program to Marion County residents at-large. "We're so excited about the opportunity to expand the program's reach and help more people," Dennis said.

"The initiative is about preventing the downward spiral just one fall can have on someone's health. While providing high-caliber fire rescue and emergency medical care to residents is MCFR's focus, creating opportunities to help people lead safer lives is also a part of what the department does," said Fire Chief M. Stuart McElhaney.

"During the last two years, fall-related emergencies have accounted for 47-50 percent of the trauma calls that our crews have responded to, and that shows us that there's an opportunity to make a difference by providing the community access to better fall-prevention information and education," McElhaney added.

Residents who have concerns about falling – or want to address the risk factors before getting to that point – are encouraged to attend any of the three remaining Big Balance Theory® sessions. After each presentation, residents can receive a free balance assessment that will help them determine where they can improve to help prevent a fall. Two days later, residents are invited to participate in a class featuring hands-on instruction for exercises that can be done at home to improve strength, balance and confidence. It's recommended that residents attend both the presentation and the exercise class.

For more information, please call 352-291-8000.

BY THE NUMBERS

- 47% (3,974) of the trauma-injury calls that MCFR responded to were related to a fall.
- There are 2 types of risk factors that contribute to falling – internal and external. The Big Balance Theory® program addresses both. (Dennis, OTOW fitness director)
- 50% of elderly who sustain a fall-related injury are discharged to a nursing home. (Dennis, OTOW fitness director)
- In the next 17 seconds, an older adult will be treated in a hospital emergency department for injuries related to a fall. (Centers for Disease Control)
- 1/3 of falls are due to environmental hazards in the home. (Dennis, OTOW fitness director)
- In the next 30 minutes, an older adult will die from injuries sustained from a fall. (Centers for Disease Control)



Sign up for a session today!



Big Balance Theory® Sessions

On Top of the World Master the Possibilities

Aug. 12, 10 a.m.- noon
(presentation and fall assessment)

Aug. 14, 10-11 a.m.
(Class: hands-on exercises)

St. Joseph's of the Forest Catholic Church

Sept. 23, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
(presentation and fall assessment)

Sept. 25, 10:30-11:30 a.m.
(Class: hands-on exercises)

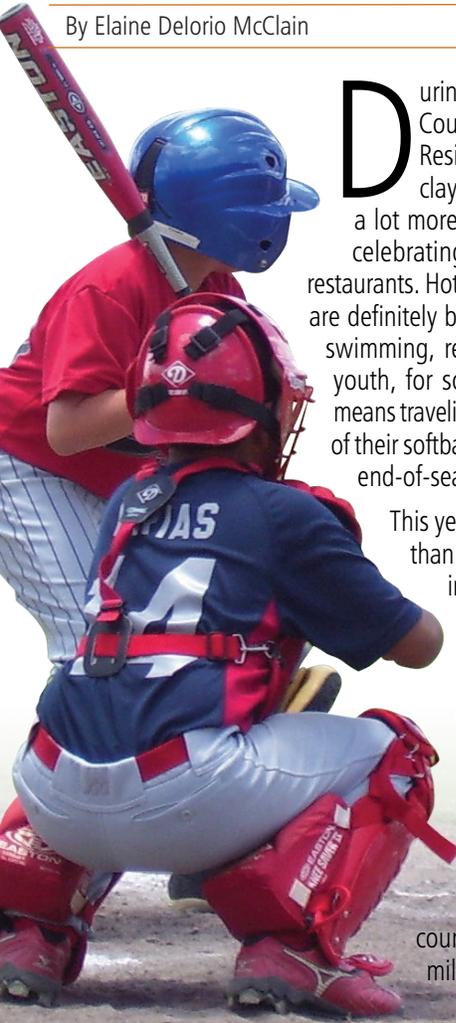
Silver Springs Shores Presbyterian Church

Dec. 16, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
(presentation and fall assessment)

Dec. 18, 10:30-11:30 a.m.
(Class: hands-on exercises)

Tournaments turn up local economic success

By Elaine Delorio McClain



During the summertime months, Marion County becomes just a little sportier. Residents may notice a little more red clay being tracked through stores and a lot more kids in ball caps and shin guards celebrating wins or nursing losses at local restaurants. Hotels might be fuller and county parks are definitely busier. Though summertime means swimming, relaxing and adventuring for many youth, for some young athletes, summertime means traveling to Marion County for the pinnacle of their softball, baseball or soccer season – their end-of-season tournaments.

This year, Marion County welcomed more than 200 youth sports teams to compete in nine tournaments hosted in county parks. The team members and their families leave footprints on far more than just the ball fields on which they play. Bringing the young players and their families to Marion means more hotel stays, restaurant visits and shopping trips; in 2012-2013, experts estimated the economic impact of the youth sports tournaments hosted at county facilities to be more than \$1.95 million dollars.

The tournament season is a busy one for Parks and Recreation staff, too. Staff is specially trained to correctly groom and line sports fields, and they provide the service before and between games to ensure the fields are ready for play. Staff also maintains the facilities to ensure they're clean and safe so event coordinators can focus on the athletes, coaches, umpires and concessions.

Though eight tournaments are already finished for the year, **Marion residents have one last chance to experience the excitement and cheer on our Marion County home team set to play in the 14U Cal Ripken World Series Aug. 13-23, at the Rotary Sportsplex. This tournament features eight regional winners from across the nation, as well as the Marion County team and a Florida champion. Call 352-671-8560 for information.**

How many vehicles entered the sports complex parks in FY 12-13?

- Belleview Sportsplex – 123,553
 - Rotary Sportsplex – 104,764
 - Wrigley Fields – 38,971
 - Shocker Park – 22,884
- (7-month total count since Parks took over the facility mid-year)

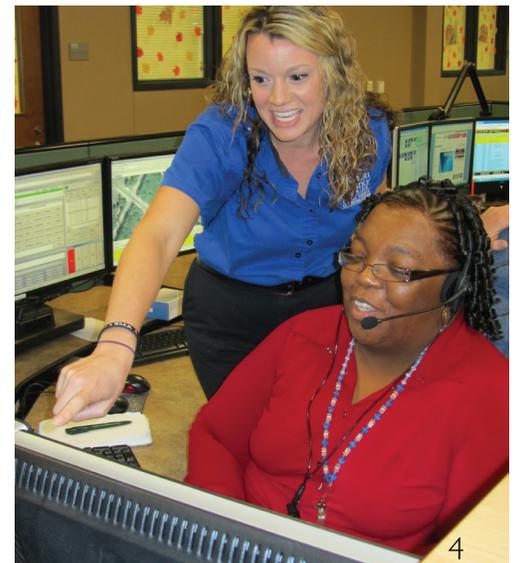
Public Safety Communications earns accreditation

By Jessica Greene

Each time there is an emergency, real-life heroes spring into action even before lights come on and sirens sound. The highly-trained dispatchers at Marion County's Public Safety Communications Center (PSC) help residents as soon as 911 is dialed – and they have garnered another top-notch accreditation for their excellence in delivering this service.

The department recently earned accreditation from the Florida Telecommunications Accreditation Commission (FTAC), becoming the first dispatch facility that handles more than just law enforcement emergencies to receive this recognition. FTAC assessors closely evaluated the department and interviewed many of the PSC's 65 employees, judging the agency on its compliance with 116 standards of training, security, dispatch operations (fire, EMS and law enforcement) and handling of critical and unusual incidents.

Continued on page 5



The FTAC accreditation comes on the heels of other recognitions; the department is one of only a few centers in the world to hold fire and EMS accreditations from the National Academy of Emergency Dispatch (NAED).

"It raises us to a higher standard," Public Safety Communications Director Karl Oltz said of the PSC's dedication to obtaining such credentials. "Some centers aren't accredited at all – they set their own standards. We hold our dispatchers to criteria set by outside experts. It should give residents confidence to know that when they need help the most, they'll be speaking with people who have proven their competence and ability."

Dispatchers employed at Marion County's PSC center receive more than three months of training, which prepares them to handle three types of emergency calls: law enforcement, fire and EMS. Their work is constantly reviewed and critiqued, because how they respond at the other end of the line in any given situation can mean life or death.



DID YOU KNOW?

- The PSC serves six local agencies -- Marion County Fire Rescue, Ocala Fire Rescue, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Dunnellon Police Department, Dunnellon Fire Department and Belleview Police Department.
- Just last year, the department made implementations that will save taxpayers upwards of \$850,000 on a reoccurring basis.

Marion County Public Library System presents

READY TO READ ZERO TO THREE

expo

Saturday, Aug. 23
10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Community sponsor:
OCALA.com

Headquarters-Ocala location
2720 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala ■ 352-671-8551



**KYLE W.
DRUMMER**
DISPATCHER II

Compiled by Jessica Greene

Educational background: Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Psychology, and Master of Education in Educational Leadership (Higher Education).

When did you start with Marion County? Feb. 13, 2012.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

What led you to your current career or position, and what made you interested in working in your field? My passions are advocacy and pure service. After moving from Boca Raton to Reddick in 2011, the Department of Public Safety Communications and the field of emergency dispatch provided me the opportunity to serve people in need, and work with others doing the same.

What's your favorite or most rewarding part of your job? Other than the service and teamwork components, I mostly enjoy the fast-paced and dynamic nature of my work.

What is your typical day, week or month like? My typical day is spent in the communication center, where everything is atypical. Otherwise, I'm at home with family on a horse ranch in the small town of Reddick.

What work accomplishment have you been proudest of? Having been awarded "Telecommunicator of the Year" by my peers was a notable professional accomplishment, for which I'm terrifically honored. However, I'm genuinely most proud after I am successfully able to help someone through a difficult time.

What would you like for the average resident to know about your department or position? Emergency dispatchers bridge the gap between a person who needs help and the help they need, making the struggle of that person their own. Despite enduring overwhelming scrutiny on all fronts, these highly-trained and talented professionals perform their duty with no expectation of wealth or recognition for their sacrifice. I would share with the everyday citizen my acknowledgement of their service, and encourage the same.

Tell us a little about your home life (kids, pets, etc.) My best friend, Carrie List, and I are the proud parents of Vegas, our Bengal son (cat). On my horse ranch there are nine horses and a pig, two cats and three dogs, and all manner of other creatures – owls, spiders, bats, foxes, hawks, snakes, a fallen squirrel and a purported coyote, panther, or both – that we treat like pets.

If you could be or do anything else – what would you do or be? I am comfortable in my life, and pleased with the direction it's taken. At risk of losing those who are important to me, I would never choose to be someone different.