



Gulfport Community Update

December 30, 2012 - January 5, 2013

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

Gulfport City Hall will be closed Monday, January 21 in observance of **Martin Luther King Day**. The Sanitation schedule will not be affected.

Upcoming Events:

The **Gulfport Walking Club** meets at the Gulfport Recreation Center, 5730 Shore Boulevard every Thursday through March 29. The Club's adventures take them through many Gulfport and Pinellas County parks. Everyone walks at their own pace, so feel free to do a mile or five. Call Recreation Coordinator John Lapham at 893-1079 for more information.

The **Third Annual JWest Prostate Cancer 5k Walk/Run for Awareness** is Saturday, January 5 at 8 a.m. For more information on these two events please call Mike Calimari at 638-2389, or visit www.jwestprostatefoundation.org.

The **Gulfport Tuesday Fresh Market** is a weekly year-round open-air market featuring fruits, vegetables and a wide variety of foods, hand-made art and crafts, bath, body and wellness products, live music and more. Over 50 vendors and exhibitors participate each Tuesday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. with extended hours until 8 p.m. and special events on the first Tuesday of each month. Bring donations of non-perishable food, toiletries and personal needs for the **Gulfport Multipurpose Center Pantry** to the Gulfport Merchants Association tent each Tuesday. Donate your gently used clothes to the **Clothing Swap to Benefit CASA** (Community Action Stops Abuse) at the Peninsula Courtyard 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. on January 8. Bring your own hangers. Extra clothing donations for CASA are appreciated. For more information visit www.gulfportma.com or www.facebook.com/gulfportfreshmarket, call Daniel Hodge at 366-4086 or email dan@igc.org.

Everyone is invited to the **49th Street South Business Association (So49)** meeting at the Neighborhood Center, 1617 49th Street South on Wednesday, January 9, at 5:30 p.m. For more information call 515-4941.

Everyone is welcome at the **Crime Watch Meeting** at the Gulfport Neighborhood Center at 7 p.m. Monday, January 14. Call 327-3509 for more information.

Join the City of Gulfport at the Waterfront Complex, Pavilion # 7 on Friday January 18 at 10 a.m. for the annual **Arbor Day** celebration. Free refreshments will be offered and attendees will receive seedlings to take home. For more information please call 893-1118.

Enjoy **Third Saturday Gulfport Art-Walk** on Beach Boulevard in the Waterfront District on Saturday, January 19, 6 - 10 p.m. Call 322-5217 for more information.

Join Tampa Bay Times staff writer Craig Pittman for evening **An Evening of Orchids and Scandal** at the Gulfport Public Library 7 p.m. Thursday, January 24. Mr. Pittman is the author of several books, and will discuss his latest work *The Scent of Scandal: Greed, Betrayal, and the World's Most Beautiful Orchid*. For more information please call 893-1074.

Weekly Casino Ballroom Events

- Every Tuesday, 12 p.m.: Ballroom lessons, - \$7
- Every Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.: Argentine Tango Dance/ Lesson - \$7
- Every Wednesday, 6 p.m.: Swing Dance/Lesson - \$7
- 1st and 3rd Thursday 7 p.m.: Salsa Dance/Lesson - \$7
- 1st and 3rd Sunday, 6 p.m.: Band/Ballroom Dance and Band - \$7

- 2nd & 4th Sunday, 6 p.m.: Ballroom DJ & dance - \$7

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Administration

Examples of arrests and significant incidents or calls this week:

Officers responded to the 1500 block of 58th Street on the evening of December 27 regarding a vehicle crash. The driver of a motor scooter was taken to Bayfront Medical Center with injuries. He was cited for riding without a helmet and no motorcycle endorsement, and the driver of the vehicle that struck him was cited for careless driving.

Officers were dispatched to the 5800 block of 26th Avenue in the early morning hours of December 28 regarding a male who was hallucinating and claiming that God was going to strike him down. Officers found the man knocking on neighbors' doors, and was taken into protective custody under a Baker Act and transported him to St. Petersburg PEMHS.

Officer Davis stopped a vehicle traveling southbound in the northbound lane of Beach Boulevard early December 28. The driver was unfamiliar with area but had suspended driver's license for failure to pay a traffic fine. The driver was issued a citation.

Officers responded to the intersection of 58th Street & Gulfport Boulevard on the morning of December 28 after a vehicle traveling westbound on Gulfport Boulevard ran a red light and struck the passenger side of a vehicle traveling southbound on 58th Street. No injuries were reported.

A man was transported by ambulance to Palms of Pasadena Hospital following a crash at the intersection of Gulfport Boulevard & 51st Street on December 28 after his vehicle swerved off the road and sideswiped a stop sign before coming to rest in the dirt. The man reported he had a medical issue which caused him to lose control of his vehicle. He consented to a blood draw which was submitted to the PCSO forensic laboratory and officers are awaiting results.

Patrol officers stopped a vehicle in the 1500 block of 58th Street for multiple traffic infractions early December 30 and determined the driver was impaired. She refused to perform field sobriety tasks and was transported to the Gulfport Police Department for a breath test, which she also refused. While at GPD she kicked Officer Ashcom's hand, and was subsequently restrained and transported to the Pinellas County Jail.

Officers responded to the 5200 block of 13th Avenue on the morning of December 30 after a woman stabbed her boyfriend in the arm with a pocketknife. The victim sustained a puncture wound and was transported to the hospital for treatment. The woman was arrested and transported to the Pinellas County Jail.

Officer Ashcom was investigating a possible vehicle burglary in the area of 49th Street & Tangerine Avenue on the morning of December 31 when the victim observed the suspect in the passenger seat of a car driving by the scene. The car was stopped and the suspect gave Officer Ashcom a false name. He was asked several times to provide his name and DOB. Officer Ashcom verified his identity in the computer system and arrested Lucas Perez for providing a false name.

Investigations:

New Cases:	16
Cases Suspended - no leads	9
Cases Assigned:	5
Cases Cleared With Arrest:	0
Cases Exceptionally Cleared:	0

Cases Unfounded/No Crime:	1
Cases Referred Back to Patrol:	1
Supplements Received:	11
Cases Cleared With Arrest:	0
Previously cleared with Arrest:	0
Cases Closed-No Leads:	0
Cases Unfounded/No Crime:	0
Exceptionally Cleared:	0
Cases Still Active:	11

Records

Reports reviewed:	9
Supplements reviewed:	19
Reports disseminated:	2
Public records requests:	0
Bike registrations:	0
Fingerprints:	0
Subpoenas processed:	7
Citizens assisted:	16

LEISURE SERVICES

Technical Events

Visit www.mygulfport.us or www.youtube.com/user/cityofgulfport to watch videos of recent City events. Cable and DSL internet users can access live and web stream rebroadcasts at www.mygulfport.us/GTV615/Live_Webstream.htm. It's a great way to keep in touch with out of town family and friends! Spread the word!

- Distributed biweekly press releases to Gabber, and weekly Constant Contact newsletter to email distribution list.
- Rebooted GTV615 station equipment.
- Continued preparations for 2013 City website meeting pages.
- Provided Control Room Coverage for January 3 City Council meeting. Rebroadcast on GTV615 and made DVD copies for IT Department and City Clerk's office.
- Uploaded upcoming City events and announcements to Gulfport Patch website.
- Continued preparations for the 2013 Pinellas County Fair presentations.

Parks

Set up registration table and marked course in preparation for 5K run.

Procured new flags from All American Flags.

Removed graffiti from Tomlinson & Caldwell Park playground equipment.

Removed rail fence at Volleyball court.

Adjusted irrigation at City complex.

Weeded, trimmed and cleaned Library & Multipurpose Center grounds and Marina area, and hand raked around benches & pavilions.

Mowed Clymer, Veterans & Caldwell Parks, Multipurpose Center grounds, Library grounds, 14th Avenue medians, Pasadena entrance area and Recreation Center field.

Opened & cleaned Skate Park daily.

Staff continues to rake Gulfport Beach & volleyball areas every Monday and Friday. Trash and debris were picked up along the water and children's playground areas. Trash receptacles were emptied and the Bocce Ball courts were inspected for needed repairs.

Other Activities:

- All City park trash containers and cigarette waste containers were emptied.
- Watered all non-irrigated areas.
- Cleaned all City playground areas.
- Mowed, raked, lined and dragged all ball fields daily.
- Lowered and raised flags per Federal Order.

GEMS (Gulfport Extended Mini-Bus Service)

The City of Gulfport offers transportation service for residents 55 and older. GEMS (Gulfport Extended Mobility Service) offers rides to grocery stores, medical appointments, etc. The \$65 annual registration fee entitles members to ride GEMS for \$2 per one-way trip and is good for one year from date of registration. Want to go shopping? GEMS offers hourly trips to: South Pasadena on Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays; the Tyrone shopping area on Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons, and; Walmart & Aldi every Tuesday afternoon. Call 893-2242 for more information on this door-to-door service.

Multipurpose Center

The Multipurpose Center will be closed on Monday, January 21 in observance of **Martin Luther King Day**.

Think you know word games like sudoku, crosswords, find the words, Try Quares etc? Challenge your mind at the **Puzzle Party** at 11 a.m. Tuesday, January 8 and learn more about these mind refreshing games.

Need assistance with your smart phone, iPad or android tablet? The Gulfport Multipurpose Center will offer classes for registered members with Karen Gates every Monday. January classes are full. Call Gail at 893-2237 to register for the next class. This service is available for registered Multipurpose Center members only. Call Gail at 893-2237 for more information.

Join Escot Tours for a visit to Hard Rock Café. The bus will leave the Multipurpose Center at 7:45 a.m. every Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday beginning January 8. The \$20 fee includes \$30 in casino tokens. Call 545-2088, 888-571-7778 or visit www.escotbuslines.com for more information.

Join Cindy from Life Alert in the Multipurpose Center Dining Hall on Wednesday, January 9 at 1:30 p.m. for a free **Medical Alert Seminar**.

Want to learn more about your family tree? Instructor Kay Boatwright will assist in researching family histories 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. every second Friday beginning January 11 at the Catherine Hickman Theater. Learn where ancestors come from and nationalities; find out the variations of the spelling of surnames and how to build a family tree. This event is open to registered Multipurpose Center members only. For more information call 893-2237 or 893-1231.

Join us for the next **Snack Bar Movie Day** on Tuesday, January 15 at 11 a.m. when Stephanie cooks up a Hot Rib sandwich special for \$2.50. The movie is FREE!

Simone Healthcare will offer **free blood pressure screenings** in the Theater lobby on Thursday, January 31 beginning at 10 a.m.

The next **First Friday Mini Flea Market** is February 1, 9 a.m. - noon. Find great items at affordable prices while supporting Multipurpose Center special programs. Drop canned goods into the new "Love Bucket" for the Multipurpose Center pantry.

Multipurpose Center members who like to sing and love music are invited to sign up for a newly forming singing group. Stop by the Multipurpose Center, call Gail at 893-2237 or Cynthia at 893-1231 for more information!

A representative from the Community Law Program visits the Multipurpose Center at 10 a.m. every third Friday offering free legal help for people over 60 who meet certain criteria. Call 582-7480 for more information.

Ready to get fit and meet new friends? If you're over 50 visit the **Foundation Fitness Center** Monday - Thursday 8 a.m. - 7 p.m., and Fridays 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Annual membership is \$25 or \$40 a couple. Stop by the Multipurpose Center and take a tour of our state-of-the-art fitness facility.

A **Beginners Line Dance class** is offered at Scout Hall at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesdays for registered members of the Multipurpose Center. Multipurpose Center membership is free.

A **Tai Chi for Arthritis Program** is offered on Thursdays at 1:30 p.m.

Gulfport Casino, Catherine Hickman Theater & Gulfport Neighborhood Center

Casino (last week's events):

Wednesday, December 26 6 p.m. - Bonus lesson with Swingtime
7 p.m. - Beginner Swing lesson with Swingtime
8 p.m. - Swing dance (Turnout 206)

Thursday, December 27 8 p.m. - Private party (Turnout 180)

Saturday, December 28 8 p.m. - Milonga Gala (Turnout 151)

Casino (Upcoming Events):

Sunday, January 6 6 p.m. - Ballroom dance lesson
7 p.m. - Ellis Hale's Band & Ballroom dance

Tuesday, January 15 12 p.m. - Ballroom lessons with Carol Baker
2 p.m. - Ballroom dance Admission \$7
6:30 p.m. - Beginning Argentine Tango lesson
8 p.m. - Milonga dance Admission \$7

Every Wednesday 6 p.m. - Bonus dance lesson with Swingtime
7 p.m. - Beginner Swing lesson with Swingtime
8 p.m. - Swing dance Admission \$7

Every Thursday 7 p.m. - Salsa lesson with Carol Rivera
8 p.m. - Salsa dance Admission \$7

There were no events in the **Catherine Hickman Theater** last week.

Catherine Hickman Theater (upcoming events):

Thursday - Saturday, January 10-12, 17- 9 & 24-26, 8 p.m., and Sunday, January 13, 20 & 27, 2 p.m. - Gulfport Community Players presents **Sordid Lives**, a black comedy about white trash. Tickets are available at the Gulfport Casino, Beach Bazaar & the Gulfport Chamber of Commerce, or by calling 322-0316.

Neighborhood Center (Last week's events):

Sunday, December 23 6:15 p.m. - Over Eaters Anonymous meeting (Turnout 15)

Neighborhood Center (Upcoming events):

Every Sunday 6 p.m. - Overeaters Anonymous meeting

Every first - third Sunday 9:30 a.m. - Faith Cathedral International Church services

Every fourth Sunday 9:15 a.m. - Bible study

Scout Hall (Last week's events):

Sunday, December 23 Church service (Turnout 31)

Monday - Friday 7 a.m. - Alcoholics Anonymous meeting

Scout Hall (Upcoming Events):

Every Monday - Friday 7 a.m. - Alcoholics Anonymous meeting

LIBRARY

The Gulfport Library offers free one-on-one computer instruction on a first come basis every Monday and Wednesday from 10:30 a.m. until 1 p.m.

Public Programs/Meetings/Events:

- Wednesday, December 26, 10 a.m. - *Gulfport Prompt Short Story Writers* meeting.
- Wednesday, December 26, 3 p.m. - *Teen Zone*, facilitated by Sheri Stanley.
- Thursday, December 27, 9:30 a.m. - *Beginning Spanish* class.
- Thursday, December 27, 10:30 a.m. - *Storytime for Preschoolers* facilitated by Cailey Klasson.
- Thursday, December 27, 4:30 p.m. - *Business Debtors Anonymous* meeting.

Upcoming Events:

- Friday, January 4, 7 p.m. - *DrumQuest*. Join us for a highly interactive evening of fun for all ages, no drumming experience required! For more information call Cailey at 893-1134.
- Thursday, January 10, 3:30 p.m. - *Maya the Reading Assistance Dog*. To schedule an appointment please call 893-1073
- Saturday, January 12, 11 a.m. - *Crafts for Kids*. For more information call Cailey Klasson at 893-1134.
- Thursday, January 17, 10:30 a.m. - *CoffeeTalk*, sponsored by the Circle of Friends of the Gulfport Library. Join us for light refreshments and coffee, and discussion of the book *Other Voices, Other Rooms* by Truman Capote. Copies of the book are available at the Circulation Desk. Call 893-1073 for more information.

- Saturday, January 19 - Free Family Movie day: 10:30 a.m. - *ParaNorman*; 1:30 p.m. - *The Dark Knight Rises*. Enjoy free popcorn provided by the Circle of Friends of the Gulfport Library. For more information call 893-1073.
- Tuesday, January 22, - *SCORE Counseling*: Free & helpful advice from experienced business professionals. For more information or to schedule an appointment call 893-1073.
- Every Tuesday, 3 p.m. - *eSalon*. Learn to browse, place a hold, check out and download ebooks from our digital catalog. Meet with others to learn the basics, or discover new ways of using the e-Reader, tablet or mp3. For more information call 893-1073.
- Every Tuesday, 5:30 p.m. - *Free Thinkers Open Twelve Step* meeting. For more information please call 916-0916.
- Every Wednesday, 10 a.m. - *Gulfport Prompt Short Story Writers* meeting.
- Every Wednesday, 3 p.m. - *Teen Zone*. Challenge your friends on the latest XBOX 360 games or just hang out and enjoy free refreshments.
- Every Thursday through February 28, 12:30 p.m. - *Conscious Awareness Group* meeting. Sessions include a short meditation period, audio recording of a chapter of *Practicing the Power of Now*, group discussions and video recordings of Eckhart Tolle's teachings from Eckhart Tolle TV.
- Every Thursday, 9:30 a.m. - *Beginning Spanish*.
- Every Thursday, 10:30 a.m. - *Storytime*: Enjoy picture books selected to be read to preschool age children, in the Youth Services area at the rocking chair near the Easy books.
- Every Thursday, 4:30 p.m. - *Business Debtors Anonymous*.

Library Services/Statistics 23 - 29, 2012:

Items Circulated Patrons

Weekly Circulation:	1,426	447
Sun. 12/23	16	5
Mon. 12/24	34	16
Tue. 12/25	8	4
Wed. 12/26	461	124
Thu. 12/27	378	116
Fri. 12/28	282	102
Sat. 12/29	257	80

Recreation Center

Programs, Classes & Activities

Forty three (43) children are registered for the School Year Child Care program, a quality program that provides a nurturing atmosphere where children in Kindergarten through age 14 have the opportunity to experience recreational, social, creative and enriching activities. Program hours are until 5:30 p.m. with extended hours available until 6 p.m. for an extra charge. Annual registration fee is \$17 for residents and \$110 for non-residents with monthly fees of \$146 for residents and \$292 for non-residents. Bus transportation is available from Pasadena Fundamental, Gulfport Elementary, Bear Creek Elementary and Douglas Jamerson Elementary.

Eleven (11) children are registered for the 2012/13 **Tot Time Program**, and eight (8) for **VPK (Voluntary Prekindergarten)**. Tot Time is a pre-school, hands-on program for children ages 3-

5. VPK is FREE for children who live in Florida and who turned 4 years of age by September 1. Both programs aim to make learning fun for children and help prepare them for Kindergarten.

Contractual classes: Braveheart Bootcamp, Conversational Spanish, Fencing, Gymnastics, Hula Dance, Karate, Pickleball, Table Tennis, Tai Chi, Tennis, Yoga and Zumba.

Registration continues for the **2012/13 Teen Night program**, a great hang out for teens in grades 6-12 providing recreation and social activities, and offers monthly field trips, cooking projects, guest speakers and service projects. The teens utilize the gymnasium, game room and outdoor area. Annual registration fee: \$2 for residents, \$22 for nonresidents. Program hours are Monday, Wednesday & Friday, 6 - 9 p.m. To date fifty three (53) teens have been registered.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Customer Service and Finance

- Account Activity (Water and/or Marina): 14 new, 0 closed
- Water payments: 967 totaling \$159,033.89
- On-Line Water payments: 83 transactions totaling \$8,352.90
- Bright House payments: 11
- Accounts Payable 12/28/12: 414 transactions totaling \$263,212.41
- Mail processed 12/28/12: 1,313 pieces totaling \$958.85
- Purchasing Cards December report: 161 transactions totaling \$22,596.45

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Calls for Service:

- 50 Emergency Medical Calls
- 2 Structure Fires
- 2 Traffic Incidents (1 Trauma Alert)
- 4 Fire Alarms

Life Safety

Fire Inspector/Investigator Vento has completed investigation of a December 24 structure fire.

The **CERT Team** meets monthly at the Gulfport Multipurpose Center, 5501 27th Avenue South. The next meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Thursday, January 17. For more information visit www.gulfportcert.com or call Bob Worthington at 916-8014.

This Week's activities:

- Fire Chief James Marenkovic is on vacation until January 7. Lt. Adam Poirrier is serving as Acting Fire Chief during his absence.
- The FD Supervisory staff is reviewing and updating several department policies, including training class approvals and uniforms.
- All shifts continued to work in order to ensure that all ISO required training for 2012 was completed prior to year end.
- The A-shift responded to a traffic incident involving a car and motor scooter on December 27. The driver of the motor scooter was transported as a Trauma Alert to Bayfront Medical Center. Time is a critical factor in the outcome of these types of

patients, and the A-shift was able to transport the patient 9 minutes after arrival and had the patient to the emergency room within 19 minutes, a testament of their hard work.

- The Fire Chief received a letter from the Bayfront Medical Center Director of Emergency/Trauma Services on January 3 commending the actions of the A-shift for patient care provided to a Trauma Alert patient on December 28. The letter thanked the crew “for their hard work and dedication to (our) profession.” Congratulations to Lt. Huffman, FF/EMT Mathis, FF/PM Burton, and FF/PM Steindl.

PUBLIC WORKS

Building Maintenance:

- Repaired lock on Casino door and toilet in Library restroom.
- Transported vehicles to Tampa for repair.
- Performed routine daily maintenance duties at all City buildings.

Streets & Sanitation:

- Removed and disposed of animal carcasses on roadways.
- Completed billable work orders for brush, trash, electronics and Code Enforcement.
- Delivered recycling bins and “City of Gulfport Recycling Guidelines” information sheet to multiple residential and commercial properties.
- Removed traffic control obstructions and debris from various roadways and alleys throughout City.
- Cleaned, reset and maintained storm drains, grates and inlets at various City locations.
- Completed asphalt patch work on multiple potholes throughout City per direction.
- Completed alley and easement grading throughout City.
- Removed and disposed of illegal dumping at locations throughout City per direction.
- Replaced/reset damaged traffic control signs throughout City.
- Repaired sidewalks at various City locations.
- Graded Gulfport Beach and removed seaweed & debris.
- Micro-surfacing project on several roads began.
- Commenced bimonthly street sweeping.
- Completed installation of new drainage ditch at 29th Avenue & 45th Street: built new storm drain lids, removed existing concrete header, graded and laid new sod.

Water:

- Daily Chloramines sampling at the points of connection to water distribution system (includes Saturday & Sunday).
- Daily inspection and read of Wholesale meters (includes Saturday & Sunday).
- Completed 62 Customer Service-generated miscellaneous service orders.
- Completed 8 Sunshine One-Call Call Before You Dig Utility Locates.
- Replaced 1 water meter with new style meter.
- Reviewed permit application for fences, driveways and irrigation.
- Collected bay water sample at Gulfport Beach for quality testing.
- Collected biweekly bacteriological samples on water distribution system
- Repair 6” water break at 9th Avenue and 62nd Street.

Sewer

- Daily preventive maintenance and service at lift stations 1 & 2.
- Daily rainfall check and documentation.

- Daily ground water elevation recording.
- Daily per trip vehicle check inspection.
- Weekly generator exercise and preventive maintenance check on lift stations 1 & 2. Police & Fire Departments and Multipurpose Center.
- Weekly vehicle safety and maintenance inspection.
- Cleaned and televised sewer lateral at 6319 11th Avenue.

Vehicle Maintenance

- Replaced A/C compressor and performed sealed system repair on A/C in Police Vehicle #19.
- Replaced turbocharger and gaskets and replaced cab tilt switch on Fire Truck #P17.
- Replaced throttle up switch for P.T.O. on Sanitation Truck #43.
- Performed routine maintenance, repairs, etc. on various City vehicles.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Don't take chances with unlicensed contractors

The Pinellas County Communications Department offers the following information when looking for qualified contractors:

Pinellas County Construction Licensing Board helps guide homeowners in hiring a licensed contractor for home improvements

From January to July of this year, the Pinellas County Construction Licensing Board issued 536 citations against unlicensed contractors. Hiring an unlicensed contractor can put residents' homes in jeopardy, produce safety hazards and cost extra money to homeowners when work is not done correctly.

"Do your homework and follow the guidelines and resources provided to you by the Pinellas County Construction Licensing Board," said Executive Director Rodney Fischer. "Why take a chance with your money and safety?"

The function of the Pinellas County Construction Licensing Board is to regulate construction and home improvement contractors practicing in all Pinellas jurisdictions.

The licensing board can tell you if a contractor has a license. They must be licensed by the board or the state of Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation and be registered with the board. Licensed contractors have passed a competency exam and perform electrical, plumbing or structural work in compliance with the building codes.

The state requires licensed contractors to have workers' compensation and liability insurance and the board monitors their insurance coverage. Without these, if a worker gets injured on the job or damages property, the homeowner is liable. Many insurance policies will not pay claims if an unlicensed contractor was doing the work.

WHEN SELECTING A CONTRACTOR, REMEMBER:

- Talk to friends and neighbors for recommendations.
- Home improvement contractors of various skills must be licensed with the Pinellas County Construction Licensing Board. The license number must be displayed on advertising as well as on contracts. You can verify a contractor's license number and check any complaints by contacting the Pinellas County Construction Licensing Board at (727) 582-3100.
- Check with the Department of Justice and Consumer Services at (727) 464-6200 to determine the number of complaints against a business.
- Ask the contractor for references and follow through with verifying them.

- Ask the contractor for proof of insurance.
- Never deal with anyone who solicits or appears at your home unannounced.
- Obtain a minimum of two bids for the work to be done.

WHEN SIGNING A CONTRACT, MAKE SURE:

- All work should be specifically stated in the contract.
- An approximate starting and completion date should be included.
- All warranties including labor and materials should be addressed.
- A payment schedule should be contained in the contract.
- Do not give a large deposit before the beginning of work and do not pay the balance until completion.
- A three-day right to cancel rarely applies to home improvement contracts.
- Do not sign a blank contract or one containing blank spaces.
- Watch for non-refundable deposits and non-escrow accounts. In new home construction, part of the purchase price must be escrowed (this can be waived).

For more information call the board at 582-3100 or check their website at www.pcclb.com.

Building Division staff tries to take special time to work with homeowners embarking on do-it-yourself projects. Whether it's deferred maintenance or new improvements, due to hard economic times many are electing to do these projects themselves. Before beginning home improvement projects give us a call at 893-1024 to discuss plans and inspections that may be necessary, to explain code requirements and help you through the process.

Thinking of starting a new business? Check out the New Business Checklist at www.mygulfport.us under the Online Services/Documents and Publications section.

Code Enforcement activities have moved to Section 5 of the City, also known as the Marina District Area. This area comprises the southeast portion of the City which generally extends south from 26th Avenue South to the water and east from 49th Street to the City boundaries.

Because the City has one inspector who focuses on one section at a time, we depend on residents to call in violations when they see them. We will inspect within one working day of a complaint to verify any violation. Please call 893-1061 if you see violations. If the inspector is unavailable, leave as detailed a message as possible to help us find the violation. Complaints can be anonymous, but if you want a follow-up you will have to leave contact information which means the complaint is no longer anonymous.

To review the Code Enforcement Activities documents for more detailed information and a map of the Code Enforcement areas please visit the Special Documents section of the City's website at www.mygulfport.us.

January 9, 2013 Board of Adjustment:

V13-01; 6150 8th Avenue South; Variance request to reduce the front yard setback requirement by 6 feet, from 25 feet to 19 feet to allow for the construction for an new, open front porch.

Distribution:

- City Council
- City Attorney
- Department Directors
- The Gulfport Gabber
- Gulfport Chamber of Commerce
- The St Petersburg Times