



Gulfport Community Update

December 20 - 26, 2015

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

Gulfport City Hall, Library and facilities will on Friday, December 25 in observance of **Christmas Day**, and Friday, January 1 in observance of **New Year's Day**. Friday's sanitation routes will be collected on Thursday the 30th, Friday's routes will be collected on Thursday the 31st and there will be no Wednesday yard waste collection.

The **Gulfport Senior Center is accepting donations of coats and blankets** through the month of December. Grand Villa of St. Petersburg will distribute the donated items to people in the community in need of assistance. For more information call the Senior Center at 893-5657.

Upcoming Events:

Visit the 49th Street South Business Association (So49) weekly **SoTangerine Market** every Saturday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. For more information, visit www.SoTangerine.com or call 439-0164.

The **Gulfport Tuesday Fresh Market** is a weekly year-round open-air market featuring fruits, vegetables and a wide variety of foods, hand-made arts & crafts, bath, body & wellness products, live music and more. Over 50 vendors and exhibitors participate each Tuesday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Bring donations of non-perishable food, toiletries and personal needs for the Gulfport Multipurpose Center Pantry to the Gulfport Merchants Association tent every Tuesday. For more information visit www.gulfportma.com, call Susan Blankenship at 453-9093 or Chris Spencer at 902-2326, or email FreshMarket@GulfportMA.com.

The Gulfport Area Chamber of Commerce is planning an exciting new level of fun as it hosts a **New Year's Eve Gala** at the Gulfport Casino Ballroom like none before. *Glitz, Glamour & Glitter* will feature a variety of entertainment and surprises on December 31. Enjoy dancing and live music by the popular party band *Daydreams*, D.J. dance music, party favors, commemorative photo booth, roaming magician and balloon artist, sumptuous decorations, full cash bar, and a midnight ball drop with complimentary champagne toast. Guests are encouraged to dine at one of Gulfport's many fine restaurants prior to the event. Late-night tapas will be served after 10 p.m. Tickets: \$35 per person. Casino Club reservations are \$45 and include reserved seating with no table minimum or maximum, full private VIP bar area, exclusive Casino Club concierge service, tableside midnight champagne pour and premium party favors. Tickets are available at the Gulfport Beach Bazaar, 3115 Beach Boulevard and the Gulfport Casino. Space is limited, so purchase tickets early. This event is sponsored by the Gulfport Area Chamber of Commerce. For more information call Angela Lagan at 348-6490 or email Angela.Lagan@gmail.com or visit www.facebook.com/New-Years-Eve-Gala-866500280041698.

The **6th Annual Gulfport 8K J West Prostate Cancer Run and Health & Fitness Fair** is Saturday, January 2. The run begins at 8 a.m. outside Gulfport Casino, 5500 Shore Boulevard. Register at www.active.com/JWestProstatecancer8k. Registration is \$25 and \$30 the week of race. Call Mike Calamari at 638-2389 or email diggermc@earthlink.net, or: Steve Battle at 954-615-7354 or email iamstevebattle@gmail.com.

Help us plant a tree on the beach! The City of Gulfport will celebrate **Arbor Day** with help from the Gulfport Recreation School Year Childcare Program, Teen Council, the Gulfport Food Forest and Gulfport Gecko Garden at Gulfport Beach (west side of volleyball courts) on Friday, January 15 at 3:30 p.m. Free Sweetgum and Red Maple seedlings will be presented to guests. Call 893-1118 for more information.

On January 16, 2016 Gulfport residents, businesses and civic organizations will join Americans across the U.S. for the **Second Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service**. The event will begin at 8:30 a.m. with an opening ceremony hosted by Mayor Sam Henderson and Vice Mayor Yolanda Roman at Tomlinson Park on the corner of 19th Avenue & 54th Street.

Volunteers will be at their service project destinations from 9 a.m. until noon, and return to Tomlinson Park for closing ceremonies and a picnic. For more information call 893-1118, email gbiro@mygulport.us, or visit www.mygulport.us/mlkdayofservice.

It's time again for **Junk in the Trunk** on Saturday, January 23; 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. Bring your Gulfport I.D. and your junk to the Gulfport Neighborhood Center parking lot, 1617 49th Street. If you have good junk that works, drop it off at the free trade table. Free bike registration and kids free helmets. Have coffee with Zack and Josh and meet the folks from the Gulfport Gecko Garden. For more information call 893-1118.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Due to deadline constraints, the Police Department update is unavailable.

MARINA

Assisted in twenty three (23) pump outs evacuating three hundred fifteen (315) gallons of waste. Pumped eight hundred seventy five (875) gallons of gas and nine hundred thirty two (932) gallons of diesel fuel, fueling fifty seven (57) vessels.

Transient vessels

Marina staff welcomed a 27' motorboat, 43' cruiser and a 20' motorboat this week.

LIBRARY

Visit the **Circle of Friends Book Shop** during Library hours.

Public Programs/Meetings/Events:

Monday, December 14, 1 p.m. - *BarTAB, Bar Training for Active Bystanders.*

Monday, December 14, 3 p.m. - *K-5th Grade Science Club* facilitated by Cailey Klasson.

Tuesday, December 15, 2 p.m. - *Computer Class for Beginners* facilitated by Alex Hooks.

Tuesday, December 15, 5:30 p.m. - *Free Thinkers Open Twelve Step meeting.*

Wednesday, December 16, 10 a.m. - *Gulfport Writers meeting.*

Wednesday, December 16, 3 p.m. - Teen Hangout.

Wednesday, December 16, 6 p.m. - Gulfport Toastmasters.

Thursday, December 17, 10:30 a.m. - *Storytime* facilitated by Cailey Klasson.

Thursday, December 17, 11 a.m. - *Coffee/Talk Book Club discussion of The Casual Vacancy* by J.K. Rowling over coffee & light refreshments.

Thursday, December 17, 7 p.m. - *Bay Voices Concert.*

Friday, December 18, 5:45 p.m. - Women's AA Club.

Friday, December 18, 7 p.m. - *Family Blanket Fort Night.*

Saturday, December 19, 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m. - *Free Family Movie Day.*

Upcoming Events:

Monday, December 28, 5 p.m. - *Open Mic Night:* Alex invites everyone to share their talents, musical and otherwise for a lively season of spontaneity. Call 893-1073 for more information.

Tuesday, January 5, 10:15 a.m. - *Mommy & Me Yoga*: Instructed by registered yoga teacher Ms. Christa, for parents and babies ages 6 weeks to 18 months. Stretch, laugh, get some strength back and rejuvenate! Call 893-1074 to reserve a spot, or email cklasson@mygulfpport.us.

Thursday, January 7, 5:30 p.m. - *LGBT Meet up*: Join us in the Library's meeting room. For more information, email gliburk@gmail.com.

Wednesday, January 8, 4 p.m. - *Welcome to Gulfport!* Are you new to, returning to, or just curious about Gulfport? Everyone is invited to this get-together co-hosted by the Gulfport Neighbors and the Library. Learn about both organizations and discover services offered by the City. For more information call 893-1074.

Tuesday, January 12, 1 p.m. - *Healing Thoughts Book Club*: This new group will meet on the second Tuesday of each month. If you have interest in understanding the relationship between our thoughts and their influence on the physical body, this club is for you. Title for discussion: *The Divided Mind*, by John H. Sarno. For more information email klane@untieyourwings.com.

Tuesday, January 12, 4 p.m. - *Middle School Robotics Club*. The group meets every second Tuesday of the month. Pre-registration required. See Cailey in Youth Services to sign up or call 893-1074.

Thursday, January 14, noon - *Lunch & Learn: 3D Printing*: Learn about and see a live demonstration of this amazing technology presented by Diana Silveira. Bring your lunch; drinks will be provided. Sponsored by the LGBTQ Resource Center. For more information call 893-1073.

Thursday, January 14, 5:30 p.m. - *Ukulele Workshop*: Learn to play one of the most popular musical instruments in our area. Classes sponsored by the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative. For more information call 893-1073.

Saturday, January 16, 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m. - *Free Family Movie Day*: For movie titles, call 893-1074.

Thursday, January 21, 11 a.m. - *Coffee/Talk Book Club discussion of The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt over coffee & light refreshments. Stop by the Circulation Desk to pick up a copy. Sponsored by Circle of Friends of the Gulfport Library. Call 893-1073 or visit the Library for more information.

Every Monday, 3 p.m. - *K-5th Grade Science Club*: We try a fun new activity every week, explore engineering through building with Legos, and meet other young scientists and engineers in the community! Parents get to join in on the fun too! Email cklasson@mygulfpport.us or call 893-1074 for more information.

Every Tuesday, 5:30 p.m. - *Free Thinkers Open Twelve Step* meeting. For more information call 360-9069.

Every first & third Tuesday, 2 p.m. - *Ukulele Group*: Everyone is invited to join Allen Goldenson for some strummin' fun!

Every Wednesday, 10 a.m. - *Gulfport Writers* meeting.

Every Wednesday, 3 p.m. - *Teen Hangout*: Games and activities for teens and tweens.

Every Wednesday, 6 p.m. - *Gulfport Toastmasters*. Email robynfeatherstonesq@gmail.com for more information.

Every Thursday, 10:30 a.m. - *Storytime*: Join us for stories & activities selected for toddlers & preschoolers in the Youth Services area around the rocking chair near the Easy books. Cailey leads the group in singing songs, playing instruments & networking with other caregivers in our community.

Every Friday, 6:45 p.m. - *Women's AA Club*. For more information call 893-1073.

Library Services/Statistics December 13 - 19, 2015:
Items Circulated Patrons

Weekly Circulation:	2,229	742
Sun. 12/13	Library closed	
Mon. 12/14	446	156
Tue. 12/15	345	112
Wed. 12/16	322	114
Thu. 12/17	289	130
Fri. 12/18	361	115
Sat. 12/19	265	83

PARKS & RECREATION

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/gtv-640. Spread the word!

- Distributed press releases to Gabber, and weekly Constant Contact newsletter to email distribution list.
- Rebooted TV station equipment.
- Continued updates and enhancements to mygulfport.us.
- Updated meeting schedules, agendas & minutes, upcoming events, Public Works, Human Resources and water quality information on City website.
- Continued preparations for MLK Day of Service.
- Continued preparation of January calendar.

Multipurpose Center

The Gulfport Multipurpose Center invites everyone 50+ to sign up for free. The Center is open 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. Monday-Thursday, and Fridays, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Like us on Facebook at Gulfport Senior Center and Foundation. Help our page grow and get daily valuable information! Stop by the Senior Center for this month's calendar or download a copy at www.mygulfport.us.

Gulfport Extended Mobility Service (GEMS) offers transportation to grocery stores, medical appointments, etc. Gulfport residents 55 & older or residents with a disability can take advantage of GEMS door to door service for a yearly membership of \$65 plus \$2 per ride. GEMS also offers transportation to Bay Pines VA Hospital & Medical Center, Northside Hospital and the St. Pete Beach Family Aquatic Center. For more information call 893-2242 between 8 a.m. & 1 p.m.

The Senior Center participates in the **Neighborly Dining & Meals on Wheels** program, offering lunches for seniors 60 and older. Call Joe at 344-2111 to inquire about the program or to lend a hand as a volunteer driver.

The **Gulfport Multipurpose Center Pantry** is in need of peanut butter, tuna, dry cereal, pasta sauce, soups & canned meats. The pantry is open 1 - 3 p.m. every Tuesday & Thursday for qualified Gulfport residents 50 & older. Applicants should bring a photo I.D., a utility bill or bank statement and proof of income (SSI). For more information please see Rachel, or call 893-1231.

The Gulfport Multi-Purpose Senior Center has **multiple volunteer opportunities** available. If you want to make a difference and help your community, join the volunteer program at the Senior Center. It's a great way to meet new friends and to get acquainted with more than 50

programs, classes and workshops. Volunteers assist as Lobby Receptionist, Fitness Center Attendants, Reassurance Callers, Class/Activity Instructors, Special Events, Food Pantry, Clerical Support, Flea Market, Promotions, Bingo, Card/Magazine organizing, etc. Call Rachel at 893-1231 or stop by the Center at 5501 27th Avenue South for more information.

Get the facts for 2016 and what you can expect from your insurance company. The **Insurance Workshop** is Wednesday, January 6 at 2 p.m. Presented by Professional Insurance.

Join us for **Empowerment of Healing with Barbara Newborn** on Monday, January 11 at 3 p.m. Learn where and how to look for answers in your own body, mind, & soul to empower & nourish your whole being.

The Alzheimer's Association offers free **Monthly Memory Screenings** the second Monday of each month, 9 - 11:30 am. The next screening is January 11. By appointment only; call 893-5657 to schedule your screening.

Enjoy a healthy snack as Robert Galban of Family Focus Insurance Services presents **Fruit for Thought** every second Monday of the month. The next meeting is January 11.

Enjoy lunch and a free current movie during **Movie Day at the Snack Bar** at 11 a.m. Tuesday, January 12.

Volunteers for the **Telephone Reassurance Program** call Gulfport seniors every Monday through Saturday between 7:30 & 8:30 a.m. To sign up for this program visit the Gulfport Senior Center and bring valid I.D.

Having a problem hearing on the phone? Florida residents with a hearing loss qualify for a **FREE amplified home phone**. Florida Telecommunications Relay Inc., Family Center on Deafness issues equipment at the Gulfport Senior Center at 10 a.m. every third Tuesday of the month. This program is paid for by a surcharge on all Florida households with home phone lines and all business lines, and has been available since 1991. Call 399-9983 for more information.

Recycle your old cell phone, General Mills Box tops, Campbell's labels, can tabs and eye glasses at the Senior Center. Staff forwards these items to the proper organizations for reuse, recycle or education.

Gulfport Casino, Catherine Hickman Theater, Neighborhood Center & Scout Hall

Casino (last week's events):

Sunday, December 13	6 p.m. - Ballroom Fusion Dance with Swing Time (Turnout 74)
Monday, December 14	4:30 p.m. - Boley Centers holiday party (Turnout 350)
Tuesday, December 15	Noon - Ballroom lessons/dancing with Carol Baker (Turnout 24) 7 p.m. - Argentine Tango lesson & dance (Turnout 59)
Wednesday, December 16	11 a.m. - Chair yoga with Barbara Newborn (Turnout 33) 6 p.m. - Swing dance with Swingtime (Turnout 226)
Friday, December 18	7 p.m. - Gibbs holiday part (Turnout 300)
Saturday, December 19	6 p.m. - Wedding reception (Turnout 277)

Casino (upcoming events):

Every Sunday	6 p.m. - Ballroom dance lesson 7 p.m. - Band & Ballroom Fusion dance Admission \$8
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Every Tuesday 12 p.m. - Ballroom lessons with Carol Baker
2 p.m. - Ballroom dance Admission \$8
6:30 p.m. - Beginning Argentine Tango lesson
8 p.m. - Milonga dance Admission \$8

Every Wednesday 10 a.m. - Yoga with Barbara Newborn/Joyce Bloom
6 p.m. - Bonus dance lesson with Swingtime
7 p.m. - Beginner Swing lesson with Swingtime
8 p.m. - Swing dance Admission \$8

Every Thursday 6 p.m. - Latin Night lesson with Carol Rivera
8 p.m. - Latin dance Admission \$8

Every Friday 11 a.m. - Chair yoga with Joyce Bloom

Gulfport Neighborhood Center (*last week's events*):

Sunday, December 13 9 a.m. - Faith Cathedral Int'l Church services (Turnout 16)
6:15 p.m. - Overeaters Anonymous

Tuesday, December 15 10 a.m. - Easy Tai Chi (Turnout 22)
7 p.m. - Overeaters Anonymous

Thursday, December 17 10 a.m. - Easy Tai Chi (Turnout 18)

Saturday, December 19 2 p.m. - Retirement party (Turnout 49)

Neighborhood Center (*upcoming events*):

Every Sunday 6 p.m. - Overeaters Anonymous meeting

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

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

Every Tuesday 7 p.m. - Overeaters Anonymous meeting

Every Tuesday & Thursday 10 a.m. - Easy Tai Chi

Every first Wednesday 7 p.m. - Crimewatch meeting

Scout Hall (*last week's events*)

Sunday, December 13 9 a.m. - Calvary Christian Assembly church services (Turnout 12)

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

Monday, December 14 11 a.m. - Chair Yoga (Turnout 32)

Tuesday, December 15 10:30 a.m. - Line dancing (Turnout 13)

Friday, December 18 10:30 a.m. - Line dancing (Turnout 16)

Scout Hall (*upcoming events*):

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

Every Monday 11 a.m. - Chair Yoga

Every Tuesday & Friday 10:30 a.m. - Line dancing

Recreation Center

The multipurpose room was reserved noon - 5 p.m. for a family Christmas party with approximately seventy five (75) in attendance.

The Gulfport Recreation Center will offer **full day activities during Holiday Break** from 7:45 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. December 28-31 & January 4 for children in Kindergarten through age 14. Extended care is available until 6 p.m. for an additional fee. The children will participate in arts & crafts, field trips, sports, and much more!

Programs, Classes & Activities

Forty six children are registered for the **2015/16 School Year Child Care Program** for children in Kindergarten thru age 14. Program hours are until 5:30 p.m. with extended hours available until 6 p.m. for an extra charge. Monthly fees are \$150 for residents and \$188 for non-residents. Bus transportation is available from Pasadena Fundamental, Gulfport Elementary, Bear Creek Elementary and Douglas Jamerson Elementary.

Nine children have been registered for the **2015/16 Tot Time Program**, and ten 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 turn 4 years of age by September 1. Parents must apply at the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County, Inc. and the child must receive a Certificate of Eligibility. Both programs aim to make learning fun for children and help prepare them for Kindergarten.

Thirty five teens are registered for the **2015/16 Teen Night Program** for teens in middle school thru age 17. Program hours are 6 - 9 p.m. Monday, Wednesday & Friday. Annual registration fee: \$2 for residents, \$22 for nonresidents.

Contractual classes: Bootcamp, Gymnastics, Karate, Mat Pilates, Pickleball, Spanish, Table Tennis, Tai Chi, Tennis, Women's Self-Defense, Yoga and Zumba.

Staff Activities:

Alton Hooker worked the room rental on Saturday afternoon.

John Lapham used the school bus to transport twenty three Winter Break participants to the Boca Ciega Nursing Center this week.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Calls for Service:

- 39 Emergency Medical Calls
- 2 Structure Fires
- 4 Fire Alarms
- 5 Vehicle Crashes
- 1 Gas Leak
- 2 Fires Outside Structure

Life Safety:

- 19 Fire Inspections
- 2 Re-Inspections
- 1 Permit Review

Chief Marenkovic attended the Fire/EMS Administration meeting on December 21 to discuss EMS/ALS funding budgets for the upcoming fiscal year with County staff and other Fire Chiefs in Pinellas County.

Lieutenant/Paramedic Scott Burford of the B-shift is preceptor for a new St. Pete College Paramedic Program EMT student.

Chief Marenkovic would like to congratulate Firefighter/Paramedic Fernandez for completing the Acting Officer Requirements for the Gulfport Fire Department. Mr. Fernandez started his career here in September 2006. He has successfully completed the Acting Officer Check-list and currently holds his State Fire Officer I Certification. He is cleared to be an Acting Lieutenant on Engine 17.

All GFD Paramedics received their ACLS Provider Recertification from the American Heart Association. Certification is valid until December 2017.

PUBLIC WORKS

Building Maintenance

- Performed semi-annual hood inspections at Senior Center and Little League.
- Replaced two light ballasts at Library
- Repaired locks on cabinet in Senior Center.
- Replaced handle and flapper on Casino inside toilet.
- Replaced ceiling tile in men's restroom in Theatre lobby.
- Cleared blocked toilet in men's restroom at beach.
- Repaired light fixture outside of Fire Station.
- Delivered mail to main Post Office for Finance Department.

Parks

- Repaired fence at Wood Ibis Park.
- Replaced hardware on bench swing at beach, and greased bench swings and playground swings.
- Cleaned up dead fish at marina and beach areas following algae bloom.
- Aerated ball fields.
- Replaced trash receptacle in front of post office.
- Replaced benches at Recreation Center.
- Continued sanding picnic tables in preparation for installation.
- Continued work on tree lights and electrical outlets on Beach Boulevard.
- Mowed City Complex, Senior Center, Library, 28th Avenue South signs, Clymer Park, Recreation Center, Caldwell Park, 14th Avenue South median.
- Repaired irrigation at Library, Hoyt Field and Recreation Center.
- Trimmed, weeded, cleaned & mulched Senior Center, Recreation Center Trimmed Palm trees at Senior Center, Library and Veterans Park, hand raked around pavilions and cleaned beach.
- Greased mowers and sharpened/replaced blades and replaced PTO shaft on mower.
- Picked up trash and emptied bins along Beach & Shore Boulevards following weekend events.
- 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.

- All City parks 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.

Streets & Sanitation

- Delivered recycling bins with information sheets.
- Completed billable work orders for brush, Code Enforcement, trash/furniture & electronics.
- Removed and disposed of animal carcasses from City rights of way.
- Removed and disposed of illegal dumping and curbside yard waste throughout City.
- Repaired asphalt and potholes throughout City.
- Assembled & delivered new residential and commercial automated trash containers, and replaced broken containers.
- Cleaned and removed debris from storm drains, inlets, and storm water outfalls and reset storm grates throughout City.
- Set grade and added millings in alleyways per direction.
- Removed limbs & branches obstructing City roadways, alleyways & sidewalks.
- Continued automatic street sweeping.
- Excavated and repaired stormwater pipe on 25th Avenue between 58th & 59th Streets.
- Disposed of old tires and parts from Garage.
- Restocked recycled mulch at Neighborhood Center.
- Removed loads of debris from 49th Street holding area delivered to landfill.
- Performed monthly street sweeping citywide.
- Removed bagged leaves curbside.
- Removed sod, sand and rocks from easement at 2801 46th Street.
- Replaced concrete stormwater covers at 11th Avenue & 54th Street, 18th Avenue & 57th Street, 54th Street & 26th Avenue, and at 30th Avenue & 59th Street.
- Removed debris from beach area.

Water

- Daily Chloramines sampling at the points of connection to water distribution system.
- Daily inspection and read of Wholesale meters.
- Completed routes #45, 46, 47 & 48 of monthly meter reading schedule.
- Completed 7 non-pay rechecks to confirm water services were still off.
- Completed 81 miscellaneous customer service department service orders.
- Completed 10 Sunshine One-Call, Call Before You Dig Utility Locates.
- Reviewed permit applications for fences, driveways and irrigation.
- Collected bay water samples at Gulfport Shores, Gulfport Beach & Marina for quality testing.
- Continued locating water mainline valves throughout City.
- Replaced 3 meters that were stuck and not recording water usage
- Replaced old 3 water meters with new electronic meters.
- Repaired water break at 824 Gray Street.

Sewer

- Daily rainfall check and documentation.
- Daily ground water elevation recording.
- Weekly generator exercise & preventive maintenance check on lift stations 1 & 2.
- Weekly generator exercise and preventive maintenance at Fire Department/Garage, Police Station/City Hall & Senior Center.

- Weekly vehicle safety and maintenance inspection.

Vehicle Maintenance

- Resealed manifold block and replaced bucket cylinder on Lightning loader #29.
- Replaced battery in vehicle #12.
- Repaired tire on vehicle #78.
- Picked up vehicle #31 from Tampa Crane.
- Sent vehicle #46 to Tampa Crane for repairs following accident.
- Replaced roof hatch on vehicle #93, hydraulic hose on vehicle #41, radio antenna on vehicle #44, and radiator hose & assembly in vehicle #102.
- Vehicle #18 returned from Dodge following warranty engine repairs.
- Vehicle #54 returned from body shop following accident repairs.
- Performed preventive maintenance and various small repairs on City vehicles.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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

For more information, including a number of workshops, on starting a new business, visit the **Pinellas County Economic Development Small Business Development Center** website at www.pced.org/entrepreneurs or call 464-7332. They also offer personalized business consulting to help you become successful with your startup business.

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, many are electing to do these projects themselves. Before embarking on home improvement projects give us a call at 893-1024 to discuss plans and see what inspections may be necessary, or for an explanation of code requirements.

On anything other than small and simple DIY projects we recommend homeowners consider using a licensed contractor. Unless you are very handy and have the necessary skills to take on more complex construction projects, larger projects can quickly overwhelm those less skilled in construction methodology and management.

Don't take chances with unlicensed contractors

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

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

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 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 visit www.pcclb.com.

Code Enforcement activities continued this week in Section 5 of the City, also known as the Marina District which comprises the southeast portion of the City and generally extends south from 26th Avenue to the water and east from 49th Street to the City boundaries.

The number of code enforcement cases for November was 113. The year-to-date total number of cases is 270. The number of citizen complaints for November was 6, making a year-to-date total of 16. The fiscal year-to-date ratio of complaints to total number of cases is 5.9 percent.

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. E-mail correspondence is considered a public record, so if you wish to make a complaint using e-mail, please understand that such communications are not anonymous.

To review 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.