



# Bay County Currents

*A publication for, about and by County employees*

February 2009

Volume 4, Issue 2

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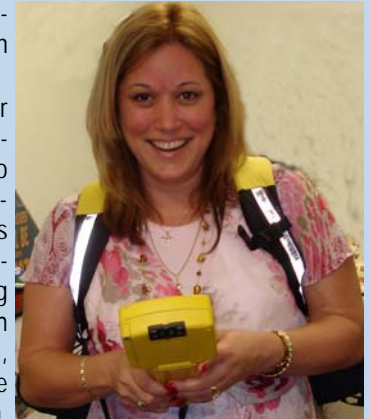
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## February Employee of the Month

Michelle Wilson started with the County in November, 2007. She is recommended as Employee of the Month for the fine job she has done in her position as GIS Specialist for Emergency Services.

She needs to be commended for her hard work and foresight in putting together a grant application for the 2008 ESRI and Xplore Technologies Mobile Government Demonstration Project Grant Program which was approved and granted to Bay County. The grant award totals \$95,950 and Bay County was 1 of 10 recipients receiving 10% of the total award as well as an Xplore rugged tablet PC plus development software. The basis of the proposal was to add tracking capabilities through GPS for Animal Control and Fire Services as well as for passing mobile data back and forth from the scene of an incident back to the dispatch center with reduction of radio traffic. This award should benefit Animal Control, Fire Services, GIS, Communications and Emergency Management. We hope this grant will allow us to move towards a countywide mobile data system. Michelle has also been cross trained with our addressing system to assist when other workers are not available. She is always punctual, dependable and possesses an ingrained initiative to constantly improve her job knowledge and skills. She's not afraid to take on new job responsibilities, and performs them with efficiency.

It is a pleasure to not only nominate Ms. Wilson for the Employee of the Month, but to have her as a vital member of our staff. Michelle's dedication to her job, ability to learn quickly, organizational skills and "can do" attitude make her an excellent candidate for employee of the month.



## 2008 Employee of the Year



Michelle Gutierrez's career began as a firefighter with the U.S. Air Force and a local assignment at Tyndall Air Force Base. Lt. Gutierrez started working for Bay County as a Firefighter II on May 09, 2005.

Lieutenant Gutierrez's achievements have been: Bay County Fire Officer of the year for 2008 and Tyndall Firefighter for the Quarter. Recently, Lt. Gutierrez was recognized by Commission Chairman Girvin for her response to a medical assist at the "free vaccination clinic" held on July 5th at the Animal Shelter. She was "on duty" at the fire department and volunteered to help with the county event occurring in her assigned fire district. While at the event a medical situation arose with a visitor. Lt. Gutierrez stepped in and attended to the individual until the crisis was resolved.

Lt. Gutierrez also holds the distinction of being the first female career Fire Officer for Bay County and the 7 municipal fire departments in the county.

All 12 Employees of the Month were honored at the Employee of the Year banquet. Pictured here with County Manager Ed Smith are (L-R): Ian Crelling, Ivan Griffin, Eve Tooley, Curtis Miller, Belinda Davis, Mike Estes, Deanne Coffield, Michelle Gutierrez, Daryl Johns, and Don Werbacher.

Not pictured: Joanne Wyndham and Michael Anderson.



[Mike Nelson](#)

District I

[George B. Gainer](#)

District II

[William T. Dozier](#)

District III

[Jerry L. Girvin](#)

District IV

[Mike Thomas](#)

District V

## Commission Meetings

February 3

9:00 a.m.

Panama City Hall

February 17

9:00 a.m.

Panama City Hall

## County Manager's Corner

*In meeting with various county employees from time to time, a question occasionally comes up regarding our County's mission. Namely: what is it? I always find this question interesting and intriguing.*

*First, a word about mission statements: they can be helpful if used in the right way, but I have too often in the past been involved in very time consuming committee-work in which our main task was to compose and select a mission statement. A statement that after adopted, was printed on banners and signs and hung on the walls.*

*And everybody took them for granted.*

*But there they were, each sign gleefully proclaiming what the organization's mission was to be.*

*I remember when Ford Motor Company had a great slogan, which was aimed at reassuring car buyers that American made cars were well made. Their motto was "Quality is Job #1!" Every time a TV commercial came on, I could count on the slogan "Quality is Job One" being referenced at the end of the pitch selling Fords.*

*Now, I like Fords. I own two of them. But how effective was their mission statement in actually accomplishing their goal? Judging by the current economic condition of US automakers, I would say it didn't assist them as much as they had hoped. Neither perhaps did "Ram Tough" or "Like a Rock".*

*Clearly delineating a goal is a useful purpose. Here's ours: using any defining measurement standard, I want Bay County to be considered as the best, most efficiently run county in Florida. There are 67, so we know our competition.*

*Can we do it? Absolutely. How will we know when we have made it?*

*Our customers will tell us.*

*They will know.*

*And so will we.*

**Ed Smith**

**County Manager**

## Library Notes . . .

In rough economic times, many people turn to their public library. Bay County is no different! Circulation of materials is up 24% over the same period (Oct.-Dec.) last year; Reference questions are up 11%; and visits are up 5%.

Bay County Public Library hit a new record high Tuesday, January 27. We had 2,004 citizens came in to use library resources and made at least (the staff did not have time to mark down every question) 171 requests for information!

One benefit to our citizens is the Youth Services Department. Youth Services staff is available to assist students in finding information and resources for homework assignments and projects. The internet is available for research including databases used to find articles from magazines, encyclopedias, and newspapers. Students with internet access in the home can access the library's databases from home with a library card.

Programs in Youth Services for all ages have experienced an increase in attendance. Many parents have had to take children out of child care and are seeking free educational programs. Programs include: Book Babies on Tuesdays at 9:30, Terrific Tots on Tuesdays at 10:30, and Pre-School Story time on Thursdays at 10:30.

The Circulation of Youth materials is up 24% over last year region wide. Parents are choosing to borrow books, audio books, DVD's, and other materials rather than buying.

Literacy Services is also providing invaluable help to patrons. Almost every week Literacy Services adds a new student who realizes he or she must learn to read better either to keep his job or to find one. Just last week a Literacy student called with the good news that she had found a job.



Books Alive will celebrate its tenth anniversary on February 7 at Gulf Coast Community College Student Center with FREE author talks.

Janis Owens will be back to premier her new CRACKER KITCHEN. If you haven't laughed with Janis, you've really missed out. John Moran, Florida's nature photographer, and Jeff Shaara, writer of American war fiction will be there, as will ten other great Southern authors.

The Keynote Speaker for this year's event is Ron Rash. Ron Rash was born and raised in North Carolina, in the southern Appalachians, where his family has lived for over 250 years. Rash holds degrees from Gardner-Webb College and Clemson University, and he now lives in Clemson, South Carolina, where he teaches English at Tri-County Technical College.

Rash has published three collections of poetry, three short story collections, and four novels; all received wide critical acclaim and several awards and honors. Rash's poems and stories have appeared in more than 100 magazines and journals over the years. "Serena," Rash's latest release, has received favorable reviews nationwide.

Check out the library's home page ([www.nwrls.com](http://www.nwrls.com)) for the full story.

### **28 Days of History**

During the month of February, your public library will be celebrating the Panama City Centennial. Each day, a different event will be held in the Local History Room of the Library.

Come honor the past, celebrate the present, and imagine the future. For info, call 522-2130 or 522-2120.

## BAY COUNTY ROOTS

### BAY COUNTY ROOTS

A monthly contest about Bay County History



**Question:**  
Where is this Civil War marker located ?

**Extra Credit:**  
What was it used for?

The answer to December's question: "Bay County's formal banking began in 1907 with the opening of what bank?" is: The Bank of St. Andrews.

**Congratulations to Evelyn Guzman of Human Resources for her entry!**

To enter this month's Bay County history contest send your answer to [ccook@co.bay.fl.us](mailto:ccook@co.bay.fl.us) or via interoffice mail to Human Resources, attn: Christy Cook. All correct entries will be entered into a special drawing. Entries must be received by February 20. The winner will receive a special prize and be recognized in the next issue of *Bay County Currents*.



### ASK SANDY

**Question:**  
If I am out on approved FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act) and a holiday occurs, will I be paid for that holiday even if I am on an unpaid status?

**Answer:**  
Yes, the holiday will be paid. Per our policy on Holidays: if an employee has received prior written approval to be off on the day before and the day after a holiday, the employee will receive holiday pay.

Send questions to [spettis@co.bay.fl.us](mailto:spettis@co.bay.fl.us) or via interoffice mail.

## Focus on . . . FRS



After five years of producing strong positive returns (from October 2002 through October 2007), financial markets are once again experiencing a high degree of fluctuation in their day-to-day activity.

The US stock market has, at times, fallen as much as 20% from its October 2007 market peak, reflecting the impact of the sub-prime mortgage crisis, as increasing numbers of borrowers are finding it difficult to repay their loans.

The ripple effect of this development has been felt not only by the housing market - one of the most significant sectors of the economy - but throughout the global financial system. Given the current turmoil, it's understandable that investors might have similar concerns about the declines in value of their retirement assets.

But in times of market uncertainty, it's especially important to keep a cool head. So what should you do with your retirement savings? Answer: return to the fundamentals.

*On February 4, 2009, Human Resources is offering FREE seminars to help you make the best choices for your retirement!*

#### Investment Basics:

Improve your knowledge and learn what investment planning really means. Learn to make sound investment decisions.

Where can you go for FREE help in making your goals a reality?

#### Using the FRS:

Learn why it is so important to plan as early in your career as possible.

Get help with your planning, so you don't have to work forever!

Where can you go for FREE help in making your goals a reality?

#### Cash & Debt Management:

Create a spending plan that will help you reach your financial goals.

Learn tips for reducing expenses, managing debt and understanding your credit scores.

Take advantage of additional FREE, independent resources provided by the FRS.

#### Estate Planning:

Estate planning is important to EVERYONE, not just wealthy people.

Learn about wills, taking care of loved ones, court costs, funeral expenses and the role life insurance can play in protecting your family.

Take advantage of additional FREE, independent resources provided by the FRS.

For More Information and to Register, call 1-866-446-9377, Option 2.

## Is your heart's health worth 12 minutes?

At January's "Cholesterol Management" seminar, participants received information on a new service from Gulf Coast Medical Center.

Cardiovascular disease is one of the leading causes of death and disability in Bay County. Gulf Coast Medical Center has introduced a screening to help employees know their risk for heart disease and stroke.

AngioScreen is a mobile cardiovascular screening. The AngioScreen team includes a registered nurse, sonographer, EKG technician, and a cardiac specialist. At the conclusion of the 12-minute screen, participants immediately receive a color ultrasound picture printout with data showing abnormalities in major arteries. There is a \$60-\$65 screening fee.

All results are discussed in detail during a personal consultation with the nurse.

We are working with Gulf Coast Medical Center to bring this screening to our work place. Stay tuned for details!





# Cooperative Extension

In 2009, Florida 4-H Youth Development will celebrate 100 years of teaching youth to become community leaders with their head, heart, hands and health. In 1909, Florida 4-H began with corn clubs for boys. Tomato clubs for girls were organized in 1912. Founded in 1902 nationally, 4-H is now the largest youth organization in the world. Nationwide, 4-H has over 9 million members, including 234,000 in Florida. In Bay County we have over 500 youth in community clubs and over 2000 involved in school enrichment projects. Florida 4-H offers youth, ages 5 – 18, diverse project topics available in all 67 counties, and with the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Florida 4-H is the youth development program of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service (CES), headquartered in Gainesville within University of Florida IFAS. The CES is funded by a partnership between federal, state and county government agencies.

Florida 4-H programs are conducted at the local county level and guided by county Extension/4-H agents and the volunteers they recruit and train. Florida 4-H uses best practices to interest youth in learning including: experiential learning (learn-by-doing); youth-adult partnerships; fun curriculum materi-

als; and activities such as contests & events, community service projects, and collaborations with other youth-serving agencies and organizations on local, regional, state and national levels.

This year Florida 4-H is working on a several projects to celebrate our heritage:

- 4-H Million Trees Project – youth are taking the initiative to help the environment and understand tree growth, maintenance and care.
- 100 Hours for 100 Years – in celebration of Florida 4-H's centennial anniversary, youth are donating 100 hours of community service.
- Operation: Military Kids – support for school-aged youth of National Guard, Reserve, Active Duty, and Accession Commands
- Florida Department of Health – to promote healthy lifestyles for youth in our communities.

—Dr. Paula Davis, Cooperative Extension



## Parks & Recreation Update

The Harder's Park Walking Trail is a great hit with the citizens of our community. Did you make a New Year's resolution to be more active? The walking trail is 2 miles with lots of rest areas along the way. Come out and enjoy!

Parks & Recreation's staff is currently constructing a stage at Under the Oaks Park. This will be a great enhancement to the festivals and events at the park. Major renovations are on-going at Simmons Park in Southport. A new lighted ball field, updates to the playground area and re-routing of the walking trail.

### Sports Events

Men's Fall Flag Football games started **January 6<sup>th</sup>** and are running thru the end of February. Games are played at 6:00pm on Thursday nights at H. G. Harder's Park. Panama City Adult Soccer games starts on February 20<sup>th</sup> at H.G. Harder's Park.

Softball season is here! Softball meetings will be held on February 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30pm here at H.G. Harder's Park. If you are interested in putting together a team, please attend the meetings.

### February's Featured Park

Under the Oaks Park & Coral Bean Addition is an 18-acre facility located at 5843 Highway 98 East in the Parker community. The facility includes a creative playground, picnic areas, walking track, observation platform, canoe launch, nature trail and lighted parking. —Gary Buchanan, Operations Supervisor



The HfH Committee will meet on February 9<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m. in the Administration Bldg. The Clerk of the Court, Sheriff, Tax Collector, Property Appraiser, and Supervisor of Election will

join us in "Raising the Roof", truly making this a Bay County employees project. Together we represent County Government employees and we look forward to working together on this important and worthwhile project.

On January 28, Mr. David Kozan, project manager of Camp Dresser and McKee, presented a \$500 check to Habitat for Humanity for the Raising the Roof Project. We thank CDM for their generous donations and support.



—Debbie Cuthbert, Chairperson

## Bay County Advance Warning Program

Everyday in Bay County, motorists are affected by unforeseen events, roadway construction and closures.

In May 2008, Traffic Engineering established the Bay County Advance Warning Program with the purchase of three Variable Message Signs (VMS) from American Signal Company.

With a successful launch of the program, Traffic Engineering submitted grant applications with the Florida Department of Transportation for a program expansion. The expansion will increase the VMS inventory to six.

The Advance Warning Program - Phase II recently received notification of award. Bay County has been awarded \$105,000 by the Florida Department of Transportation to develop and expand the safety program. —David Tharp, Engineering





## Contestants off to a BIG Start!

On Wednesday, January 28, 2009, the 46 contestants for Biggest Loser came together for their second weigh-in. In the first two weeks of the competition, our employees have lost a combined 164 pounds! They have also dropped 52.2 points off of their cumulative Body Mass Indices. Currently in the overall lead and the lead for the guys is Contestant #37 (requested name withheld) who lost an amazing 19.2 pounds for a weight loss percentage of 7.28%. In the lead for the ladies is Public Works' Sheila Rooks who dropped 8 pounds for a weight loss percentage of 4.19%. Each of these contestants will receive a prize for being the monthly winner. Two other contestants also posted double digit weight loss.

Fire Services' Marcus Vigil was in attendance to perform blood pressure checks. Many contestants are already seeing decreased blood pressure readings and are reporting other health benefits.

Over the past two weeks, contestants have received advice and guidance from Bay Medical Center, Weight Watchers, and a personal trainer from HealthPlex.

Upcoming speakers for the month of February will represent Gold's Gym, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Gulf Coast Medical Center, and HealthPlex.

The next weigh-in is February 25th. Good Luck and Good Job to all our contestants!



After dropping 12.6 pounds, Roads' Chris Lee gets his new BMI.

## Stress and Diet Seminar



In response to the evaluations from the "Coping with Stress" Seminar, we are offering another seminar for dealing with the stress in your lives. Stress management can be a powerful tool for wellness. There's evidence that too much pressure is not just a mood killer. People who are under constant stress are more vulnerable to everything from colds to high blood pressure and heart disease. Although there are many ways to cope, one strategy is to eat

stress-fighting foods.

Did you know that the type of diet you eat can actually increase or decrease your level of stress?

Foods can fight stress in several ways. Comfort foods, like a bowl of warm oatmeal, actually boost levels of serotonin, a calming brain chemical. Other foods can reduce levels of cortisol and adrenaline, stress hormones that take a toll on the body over time. Finally, a nutritious diet can counteract the impact of stress, by shoring up the immune system and lowering blood pressure. Do you know which foods are stress busters?

Come learn how you can eat your way to good health! On February 12, 2009, Patty Powell from Blue Cross and Blue Shield will be here to speak with you on stress and diet.

Seminar times are 8-9 a.m. OR 10-11 a.m. Seminars will be held at 812 W. 11th Street in the Training Room.

Please RSVP to Brooke Powell via e-mail or call 784-4085. This seminar is worth 30 points towards your Level One Wellness Credit.

## Personal Protective Equipment

One employee stepped on a board and punctured his foot with a nail. Another employee received an eye injury while painting overhead. Another employee was bitten on the hand by a dog. Yet another employee received severe chemical burns on his feet from cement exposure.

These incidents are very different but they have two things in common; all of these incidents (and many more like them) happened here in our workplace **and every single one of them could have easily been prevented.**

There is an alarming increase in injuries due to the lack of or improper use of Personal Protective Equipment.

Personal protective equipment, or PPE, is designed to protect employees from serious workplace injuries or illnesses resulting from contact with chemical, radiological, physical, electrical, mechanical, or other workplace hazards. Besides face shields, safety glasses, hard hats, and safety shoes, PPE includes variety of devices and garments such as goggles, coveralls, gloves, vests, earplugs, and respirators.

It is our commitment to you to provide you with a safe work environment. If you have any questions about PPE, please contact your supervisor or call the Office of Risk Management.

**Please remember, that if you are hurt on the job for *any reason*, it is important that you report it to your supervisor.** Again, if your supervisor is not available, contact the Office of Risk Management. Too many times an employee fails to report an injury because he/she thinks it "is nothing" or too minor, only to have that minor injury create complications in the following days.

We are here to help you. Please call Risk Management at 784-4085 with any concerns or questions.

### Upcoming Events and Classes

Biggest Loser Challenge	1/14-3/25
Stress and Diet Seminar	02/12

### REMINDER!

If you think you have an idea that would make your work area safer, please fill out a Safety Suggestion form found on NTbay under Risk Management Forms. If your suggestion is chosen you could win a prize at the next Safety Committee Meeting!

## Happy Birthday February

February 2 Kenneth Rudisill, Jo Mantz  
 February 4 Mitchell Harris  
 February 5 Rayford Jones, Elaine Everett, David Tharp  
 February 6 Nathan West  
 February 7 Felicsa Sims  
 February 8 William Sumner  
 February 9 Ann Cahall  
 February 10 John Walker, James Vinson, Ella Mulford-Ball  
 February 13 Rebecca Winters  
 February 14 Randy Johnson, Timothy Howard  
 February 15 David Gwaltney  
 February 17 Bettina Mead, Sandra Pierce, James Crosby, Geoffrey Hudson, Kristi Buchanan, Benjamin Collier  
 February 18 Rochelle Ferrera, Gary Thrift  
 February 19 Janet Morrell, David Hagans  
 February 20 Ted Taylor, Darren Robinson, Dane Matchkus  
 February 22 Jerry Walden, Dino Warren  
 February 23 Randy Jordan  
 February 24 James Dunkin  
 February 25 Peggy Malone, Otis Johnson  
 February 27 Bobby Harrell, Roy Harris, Manuel Sanchez  
 February 28 Donald Fountain, Edward Parker, Brandi Tew, Natasha Bailey

## Congratulations!

**Bettina Mead (Library)** married Samuel Farrill after 11 years of courtship. Samuel is from Central Florida and owns several restaurants in the area. We all wish her a long happy marriage

**Kyle Whitehead of Builders Services** welcomes son Evan James Whitehead. Evan was born 01/22/2009 at 8:44 p.m. and weighed 8 lbs, 9 oz and was 21.5 inches long.



If you would like to see your news in this space, contact Brooke Powell at [bpowell@co.bay.fl.us](mailto:bpowell@co.bay.fl.us) or at 784-6161.

### Bay County Board of County Commissioners would like to Honor and Thank the following employees for their loyalty and dedication!

**Ted Taylor** Fleet Maintenance; 15 years of service

**Sheila Bankhead** Library; 21 years of service

**Johnnie Hanson** Utilities; 10 years of service

**Kenny Graves** Engineering; 35 years of service

**Sharon Caister** Code Enforcement; 26 years of service

**Good Luck, Retirees!**

# AÉROPOSTALE

**25% Off**

a new pair of jeans when you donate your gently worn jeans at ANY Aeropostale store. All donated jeans will go to homeless teens across the U.S and Canada.

Valid January 26, 2009 - February 22, 2009

## Service Anniversaries

### 10 Years

Mark Bowen Emergency Services Department  
 Cynthia Thompson Landfill  
 Jerry Kearney Traffic Engineering Division

### 15 Years

Josee Cyr Stormwater Engineering

### 30 Years

Sandra Pierce Bay County Library

## Welcome Aboard . . .

John Deegins	Veterans Services
Jeffery Goolsby	Wastewater Systems Division
Christopher Mathers	GIS
Richard Poutré	Roads and Bridges Division

## Mark Your Calendars

GCCC Women's Basketball	All February
For Info: GCCC 850 872-3830	
GCCC Men's Basketball	All February
For Info: GCCC 850 872-3830	
Cirque Dreams Jungle Fantasy	02/01
For Info: Marina Civic Center 850 763-4696	
Pensacola Double Bridge Run 15K	02/07
For Info: Pensacola Sports Association 850 434-2800	
Presidents Fun Day	02/07
For Info: 850 215-8712 or <a href="http://www.panamacitykids.org">www.panamacitykids.org</a>	
St. Joe Bay Preserve Shrimp Boil	02/09
For Info: 850 229-1787	
Greyhound Meet and Greet	02/10 & 02/24
For Info: Books-A-Million 850 784-3040	
Murder Mystery Cruise	02/13
For Info: Junior Museum 850 769-6128	
Centennial Gala	02/14
For Info: 850 234-3884 or <a href="http://www.panamacity2009.com">www.panamacity2009.com</a>	
Mardi Gras on the Beach @ Pier Park	02/14
For Info: 800 722-3224	
Swing It (Swing Dancing)	02/14
For Info: The Gallery Above 850 215-9954	
Mexico Beach Gumbo Cook-off	02/14
For Info: Community Development Center 850 648-8196	
Mardi Gras Pet Parade	02/20
For Info: 850 763-6261	
St. Andrews Mardi Gras	02/21
For Info: 850 763-6261	

## Classifieds

**Selling:** '97 Mercury Grand Marquis. TOP CONDITION! Looks & Drives like NEW  
 Asking \$3,000 OBO call Sharon 348-1500

**Selling:** '07 Camry Solara, SLE Convertible, 18k miles LOADED! Sat. radio, navigation, 6 disc cd player, Bluetooth. Red w/ blk top, charcoal interior w/ wood grain detail Asking \$26,000 OBO Call Sharon 348-1500

Do you have items to sell? Contact Christy Cook at [cook@co.bay.fl.us](mailto:cook@co.bay.fl.us) or Brooke Powell at [bpowell@co.bay.fl.us](mailto:bpowell@co.bay.fl.us).