



Putnam County NEWS & NOTES

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FIRST YEAR OF BETTER PLACE PLAN COMPLETED

Over \$3 million in surtax revenue collected

Putnam County- In September of 2002 the citizens of Putnam County approved a one-cent local government infrastructure surtax to serve as a means of funding the County's Better Place Plan. The Better Place Plan is viewed as the "blueprint" for the County's development and its purpose is to manage growth, improve transportation facilities, protect natural resources, improve economic development and provide better public facilities. For the months January through October of 2003, the County received approximately \$3.5 million from sales surtax dollars.

The Board of County Commissioners approved and committed surtax funds to a number of projects in 2003. The Commission used the five project priority areas established during the Plan's Visioning Process as a basis for their decisions.

NEW SAFETY RECORD SET BY SANITATION DEPARTMENT

64,000 plus hours without a lost time accident

Putnam County - The employees of the Putnam County Sanitation Department have set a new record for the number of hours worked without a lost time accident. The 19 employees of the Putnam County Sanitation Department have worked over 30 months and 64,000 plus hours without a lost time accident. This is a record for the County according to Ken Whitehead Director of Sanitation, "From the information I have been able to obtain for other landfill operations we rank near the top in terms of worker safety for the State of Florida."

The employees of Sanitation Department were honored with a steak luncheon on Tuesday, December 16, at the Seminole Electric Cooperative Pavilion. The luncheon was sponsored by Seminole Electric, Midwest Employers Casualty Company, Arthur J. Gallagher and Company, and Gallagher Bassett Services. At the luncheon Putnam County Commission Chairman Hermon Somers congratulated the employees on their accomplishment by presenting a plaque to Ken Whitehead. "This is a win-win for our employees and the citizens of Putnam County. " "A safe working place equals a significant savings to the county." stated Hermon Somers.

Over the last two years the County has made progress in reducing the cost related to on the job injuries in all county departments. "Through the hard work and dedication of our employees, on the job injuries have been reduced by 41%" so stated Rick Leary, County Administrator.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

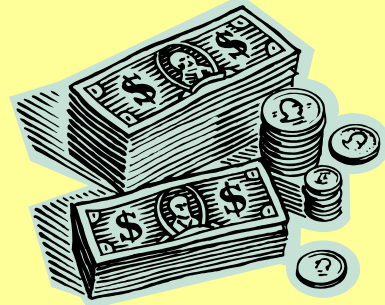
- 1 *First Year of Better Place Plan Completed*
- 1 *New Safety Standard Set by Sanitation Department*
- 2 *Commission Approves System To Save Taxpayer Money On Construction Costs*
- 3 *Employment Opportunities*
- 3 *Employee of the Quarter*
- 3 *County Library Selected for Reading Program*
- 4 *"You Asked" Column*

Continued from page 1

The project priority areas include: Quality of Life, Economic Development, Roads, Drainage and Infrastructure, Parks, Entertainment and Recreation, and Public Facilities. The following is a list of those projects which were approved using surtax funds:

- Dirt Road Improvement Program – committed to paving approximately 50 miles of dirt road in 5 years.
- Countywide Resurfacing Program – committed to resurfacing approximately 20 miles of existing County roads.
- Purchase of drainage equipment consisting of an excavator, crew cab and dump truck.
- Assist City of Palatka with completion of Transportation Hub.
- Putnam County Senior Center.
- Roof replacement of Tilton Arena at the Fairgrounds.

A Citizen Oversight Committee was established to validate that all projects funded with sales surtax proceeds are of the type described on the Better Place Plan Project List and are consistent with the enabling Ordinance. In addition to the Citizens Oversight Committee, the County is subject to an annual audit. Hermon L. Somers, Jr., Commission Chairman stated, “I believe the Better Place Plan will prove to be one of the best bargains the people of Putnam County will ever receive”.



COMMISSION APPROVES SYSTEM TO SAVE TAXPAYER MONEY ON CONSTRUCTION COSTS

Putnam County – Putnam County Administrator Rick Leary announced the approval of a contract for service to save taxpayers money on all construction projects by the Board of County Commissioners. The proposal was presented to the Board by Mr. Leary who described the concept of saving money on projects involving substantial material costs and he described that this applies to construction of facilities, roads, and other construction contracts for the County. Mike Anderson, Putnam County Finance Director, further commented, “This is a no lose situation. If there is no documented savings, there is no cost to the County. No up front funds are required.” Mr. Anderson, along with the county Budget Officer Don Bailey and the County Public Works Director Bob Merton, met with Tax research & Recovery, Inc. President Edgar Inglis for a detailed presentation of the system. Mr. Anderson reported that the company has 10 years experience in tax issues and “we are very enthusiastic about this program.”

Tax Research and Recovery, Inc. President Edgar Inglis said, “I am pleased that Putnam County has accepted our service contract and applaud the astute County management team efforts to save every penny possible for the taxpayers of Putnam County. I met with senior staff members and within 15 minutes they agreed the County had nothing to lose. We began work with Mr. Merton and the staff to negotiate alternates to save money. Within an hour of meetings we isolated an opportunity for potential savings of over \$20,000 and put a plan of action into place. We

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

GIS Coordinator
Paramedic
Emergency Vehicle Technician
Equipment Operator II
Maintenance Worker

Contact Human Resources
at 386.329.0221
for additional information.



expect to announce documentation of substantial savings on projects in the very near future. The entire County staff has shown a sincere interest in saving money for the taxpayers and that is the hallmark of effective government service.”

The County will continue to accept low bids from contractors for construction projects and the service firm of Tax & Research Recovery, Inc. will research and submit alternates that save money on those contracts. The system has been implemented and the County has special language included in all contracts that allows Tax Research and Recovery, Inc. staff to present alternates that save sales tax and other costs on materials.



COUNTY LIBRARY SELECTED READING PROGRAM EXPANSION PROJECT Only Five Florida Counties Selected to Participate in National Program

The Florida Humanities Council, the statewide affiliate of the national endowment for the Humanities in Florida, is pleased to announce that Florida is one of four states selected from a national competition for the expansion of the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities’ award-winning family reading and discussion program, PRIME TIME FAMILY READING TIME®.

At the local level, PRIME TIME is a 6 or 8-week reading, discussion, and storytelling program held at public libraries and targeted to low income families and marginal readers. A university scholar, who serves as discussion leader, and a storyteller conduct weekly book discussions based on award-winning children’s books. The program’s goal is to encourage a love of reading, the basis for kids’ success in the future. The Florida Humanities Council partnered with the Florida Department of State, division of Library and Information Services to successfully bring the Prime Time program to Florida.

Fran Carey, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Florida Humanities Council expressed her excitement about the program. “This is a great *Just Read, Florida!* Project. Prime Time will bring a humanities perspective to the Governor’s *Just Read, Florida!* initiative because it not only encourages reading, but also the discussion of ideas between readers and the world of literature. It’s a world to which everyone should have access. Reading is an activity that lasts a lifetime and enhances the reader’s chance of success in life.”

YOU ASKED:

What services and information are available on the Putnam County website?

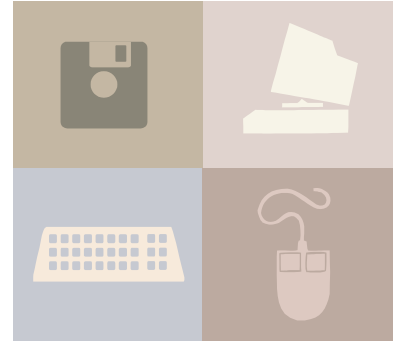
Depending on what a citizen is looking to do, the County's official website can be both informative and useful in completing daily tasks. The website's Home Page includes a mechanism for searching the website for specific items and links to other possible areas of interest within the County. Links on the site's Home page will connect the user with the following pages:

- County Commission
- Clerk of Court
- Property Appraiser
- Sheriff
- Supervisor of Elections
- Tax Collector

The site's Home page also offers the user a Site Index. The Site Index provides links to each of the Constitutional Officers and County Commissioners. The index also provides a link to the following Departments within the County:

- Administration
- Fleet Maintenance
- Human Resources
- Planning and Development
- Sanitation
- Agriculture and Extension Services
- General Services
- Library
- Public Works
- Veteran's Services
- Emergency Services
- Health Services
- Information Technology
- Parks and Recreation

Some examples of information which can be retrieved on the County's website include employment opportunities, Bid selections, voting district maps, government office locations, and



disaster evacuation routes. For additional convenience, several of the County's departments are now providing forms which can be completed online or can be downloaded to the user's personal computer. An example of a form which can be downloaded is the Planning and Development Services Rezoning Application. The application provides the user with an overview of the rezoning review process and instructions for completing the application provided.

Additional information which is now available to visitors of the website are a summary of the Better Place Plan, a County newsletter and the Citizen's Annual Financial Report, which is provided by the Clerk of Court.

The County is always examining ways to provide additional services to its citizens and will be updating and adding to its official website on a regular basis. The Putnam County official website address is www.putnam-fl.com.

This information has been provided by Gary Zabriskie of the Information Technology Department and is in response to inquiries by the citizens of Putnam County. Mr. Zabriskie is the Programmer Analyst and Webmaster for the County.