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THE TAMPA TRIBUNE
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COMMUNITY
FOCUS

Pasco

USF seeks money for Pasco classes

NEW PORT RICHEY - Officials are hopeful the Legislature will approve funding to provide University of South Florida classes in Pasco County.

By JAMES LESLER
of The Tampa Tribune

It's not yet a done deal, but legislators said they expect the University of South Florida to get more than \$2 million to pay for classes in Pasco County.

Herrando Community College's campuses in New Port Richey, Dade City and Brooksville.

"We expect a tremendous response," said Sen. Mike Fasano, R-New Port Richey. "It is very important because many individuals, especially younger people, will have the opportunity now to stay right there and get a four-year degree. They won't have to drive to Tampa every day."

The state budget still was being worked out Friday afternoon, but Sen. Jack Latvala, D-Palm Harbor, said he has been told that the college will receive more than \$3 million to expand its satellite campuses in several counties — with most of it earmarked for Pasco.

USF plans to offer classes in Pasco County at Herrando Community College's campuses in New Port Richey, Dade City and Brooksville.

Latvala said the state budget is expected to be printed today, and the House and Senate are expected to give it a final vote by midweek. But that vote is considered a mere formality, the senator said.

FHCC's Johnson was optimistic, but wanted to wait for the final results.

"I hope Senator Latvala is right on target," Johnson said. "But in dealing with the Legislature, you don't know until they've finished up and left Tallahassee."

USF initially plans to rent classroom space from the community college, Johnson said. Some USF professors will work in New Port Richey, while others will teach courses through interactive video.

About \$2 million of USF's money will pay for professors, employees and other costs associated with the Pasco classes. FHCC will receive \$300,000 to pay for the equipment needed in offering interactive classes, Johnson said.

Latvala and Fasano plan to seek more money next year to build classrooms and a larger library at FHCC. Johnson said a bigger library is a priority because "we're already out of space."

In the meantime, the FHCC president said he expects USF to help by offering a computerized library borrowing system where students can order library books that will be delivered to their homes.

Staff writer James Lesler works in New Port Richey. Reach him at (813) 915-5063.



Another Easter

Orthodox Christians will observe the Easter on Sunday, in keeping with a unique decree. Faith & Values Page 6

BIZ briefs

Laser optics maker opens Trinity office

VLOC Inc. Friday celebrated the grand opening of its new headquarters in Trinity's commercial area with a ribbon cutting and luncheon of the 45-600-sq-ft facility.

The building was dedicated to J. Chris Oles, a VLOC manager who died earlier this year.

VLOC is a subsidiary of I-VI Inc., a publicly held company based in Pennsylvania. It manufactures laser optics for the medical, industrial, scientific and military industries, among others.

New Committee of 100 members The Pasco County Committee of 100 has announced that H.M. Shroy has been elected to its board of directors.

Shroy, a physician of the banking industry, is Nationalbank market president, Succotot Division.

Paradise West Realty Inc. has hired Jackie James, Lorrie Williams, Jan Johnson, Alexis "Kookie" Cooke, Dennis Collett, Michelle Perkins and Joe Johnson.

Paradise West Realty, a full-service independent real estate firm, has locations in Hudson and New Port Richey.

West Pasco Chamber awards banquet The West Pasco Chamber of Commerce's Business Development Work Committee will hold an awards and recognition banquet next week.

It is scheduled from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at Seven Springs Golf and Country Club.

The chamber's monthly membership dinner is set for the same time and place.

In addition to the awards presentations, Michael J. Leung Jr. of Michael J. Leung and Associates Inc., a Tampa consulting business, will give a presentation on "The Importance of Local vs. Regional Economics."

For reservations, call the chamber at (813) 862-7024.

Psychotherapist has new office Judy Dvorak has relocated her psychotherapy practice to the office of Liaison Services Inc., 5207 Troubadour Road, New Port Richey.

Dvorak has been in the field of advanced psychiatric nursing since 1972. She's a licensed mental health counselor, advanced registered nurse practitioner and certified clinical specialist.

Bear Creek Nursing Center receives certification Bear Creek Nursing Center in Hudson has received special recognition from its owner, National HealthCare Corp.

The award recognizes the center and the performance of its staff as one of National HealthCare's best.

The 120-bed Bear Creek is one of 33 National HealthCare Corp. centers to receive the Gold Excellence Certification.

Family service agency earns accreditation Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Mental Health Services Inc. has been awarded a three-year accreditation by the national Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission.

Gulf Coast was accredited for its mental health and psychological rehabilitation programs of case management, crisis intervention and outpatient and residential treatment serving Pinellas, Hillsborough and Pasco counties.

Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Mental Health Services is a nonprofit organization offering services throughout central and southwest Florida since 1960.



AMY M. OTERO/Tribune photos

Swinging down the monkey bars, above, Emerald Jackson, 7, left, Ashley Downs, 7, and Erica Moody, 8, enjoy a pleasant outing Thursday at James Irvin Civic Center in Dade City. The girls are involved in a free spring break program sponsored by the Pasco County Parks and Recreation Department. At right, Terin Gant, 5, tries his skill climbing the chain ladder. The program, for children ages 6 to 12, provides outdoor play but also includes indoor games and arts and crafts.



Isaac Alexander, 6, foreground, and Nathan Downs, 5, swing part of the day away at the James Irvin Civic Center playground.

Break from the routine



Teacher helps passage of drug-testing bill

By MATTHEW HORRIDGE
of The Tampa Tribune

A Pasco teacher is getting credit for a bill, awaiting the governor's signature, designed to help kids in troubled schools.

State Rep. Mike Fasano, R-New Port Richey, and state Sen. John Grant, R-Tampa, helped push the bill through both houses of the state Legislature.

Yvonne Tomow, a behavioral specialist at Pasco Middle School in Dade City, was concerned about students' use of drugs and alcohol, she said. Their substance abuse probably helped get them into trouble and land under the authority of the state Department of Juvenile Justice.

"She came to us last summer because she was concerned about these children," Fasano said. "Talking to her did fire us up to do this bill."

The bill, which would amend an existing statute, allows juvenile justice authorities to ask a judge to impose random testing at a child's swimming or later if the youth is suspected of using drugs or alcohol.

It applies to only those teens being mentored by the juvenile justice department.

Circuit Judge Lynn Tepper, who no longer hears juvenile cases, said she included random drug testing as a sentence condition for virtually every child who appeared before her.

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Police seek missing woman

HEWSON - Deputies are looking for a woman whose severed middle finger apparently was found along U.S. 19.

By ANDY GUTLIES
of The Tampa Tribune

A piece of a finger found along U.S. 19 apparently belongs to a missing woman missing for a week, sheriff's spokesman Jon Powers said Friday.

The department seeks the public's help in locating Diane August, 41, of 170 Chesapeake Drive, Odessa.

Powers said there's the "slight possibility of foot play," although detectives believe there's at least a remote chance a cruel joke is being played.

"Who else did not take her medication correctly, her personality would change, and during those hours she was known to hang out with a pretty rough crowd," Powers said. He noted that her previous disappearances lasted only a day or two.

A woman walking to work about 4 p.m. Wednesday found what she thought to be part of a finger by the side of U.S. 19 near New York Avenue, Powers said. The nail was polished.

The woman at first thought the finger was fake, but mentioned it to her boyfriend, Powers said. The next day he also found the finger, although his description differed. That led detectives to look for two fingers. Only one was found.

Using fingerprint comparisons, technicians traced the finger to August, Powers said.

August's mother, Mildred Young of Hudson, had called the sheriff's office April 11 to report her daughter missing, Powers said. August left her sister's house on Cobblestone Drive in Hudson about 11 a.m. April 10, August was last seen a couple of hours later near the Highway Bar at State Road 52 and Little Road.

"She apparently did not have a vehicle," Powers said. "She either hitchhiked or got rides from friends."

August's family urges to hope that she may be alive.

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