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PASCO TIMES

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Columbia plans \$40-million expansion

Pasco hospital expansions

Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point is a \$40-million project adding 44 hospital beds and several operating rooms.
Pasco Community Hospital in Dade City recently opened medical office and senior services center in Zephyrhills.
Community Hospital New Port Richey now encompasses all.
North Bay Medical Center in New Port Richey expanded emergency room and a cardiac catheterization lab.
East Pasco Medical Center in Zephyrhills: a new laboratory, emergency room and lounge cafeteria.

Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point hopes to add several operating rooms and 44 beds.

By RICHARD VERRIER
Times Staff Writer

Despite fallout from a year-long government investigation, Columbia/HCA Healthcare Corp. continues to expand its hospital operations in Pasco County.
Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point will ask the state to approve a \$40-million project that would add 44 hospital beds and several operating rooms. If approved, the project would be the biggest since the hospital was built nearly two decades ago.
Dade City Hospital, recently opened a new medical office building in Zephyrhills geared to the area's senior population.
And Community Hospital New Port Richey is drawing up plans for its first alterations plan.

The expansions are in line with other capital projects planned at Columbia hospitals in Pasco County, and are seen to meet the needs of the communities that those hospitals are in, said Beth Turle, West Florida division manager for Columbia/HCA Healthcare Corp.

The projects come amid a massive corporate reorganization, one that was marked by a widespread federal investigation into Columbia's billing practices.
In July, three Columbia managers were indicted on charges of overbilling Medicare. Dr. Thomas First, who took over as Columbia's chief executive officer, stopped the company's aggressive expansion and began cutting costs.

This year Columbia has laid off more than 20 house health care workers in Pasco and cut a dozen positions, mostly managerial, at its Bayonet Point and Spring Hill hospitals.

But the cost cutting hasn't stalled hospital growth plans in Pasco.
On May 11, Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point will vote state approval to increase its licensed beds to 300.
"Tremendous growth makes capital essential so we can continue to deliver the level of care our patients expect," chief executive officer Don Griffin said.

Most of the 44 beds would be for critical-care patients and would be situated in a three-story tower on the south side of the hospital, U.S. 79 in Hudson.

Photo by HOSPITALS Page 7

A call to arms

The hot, humid weather on Wednesday did not prevent Kevin Widman, 16, from practicing with Gulf High's honor guard exhibition drill team. The squad was preparing for the school's awards banquet May 22. The team may have to practice indoors today. The forecast calls for mostly cloudy skies with a 40 percent chance of afternoon thunderstorms, and highs in the mid-80s. Tonight: Mostly cloudy with showers and thunderstorms likely. Lows in the upper 60s to near 70. Chance of rain 60 percent.



Times photo by JOHN HANCOCK/STAFF

Linebaugh girlfriend: Trooper gave ride

■ Melissa Harris says she and double-slaying suspect Earl Linebaugh were helped by an unwitting trooper shortly before two women were killed.

By IAN JAMES
Times Staff Writer

LAND OLAKEE — One day in November 1995, Melissa Harris said, she and her then-boyfriend Earl Linebaugh were riding west on Interstate 4 in an overcast U-Haul truck when Linebaugh began to get worried.

He was wanted on charges of stealing guns from his father's home in Texas, Harris said. So Linebaugh decided to abandon the rental truck at a gas station, she said, and the two started walking west on the highway.

Soon after, Harris said, a Florida Highway Patrol trooper unwittingly helped the two along on their wandering journey, which eventually took them to a mobile home in southern Pasco County, where authorities say they shot and killed two elderly women.

The trooper told them they couldn't walk on the highway and gave them a ride about 15-20 minutes down the road, she said. Harris said she kept quiet about Linebaugh because she was afraid he might shoot her with a gun he had in the back seat.

And, straying from regular protocol, the trooper never asked for any identification, Harris said. Had he done a records check, she said, their getaway might have ended there.

But it didn't. So now, Harris is serving two consecutive life terms in prison, and Linebaugh's first-degree murder trial began this week.
In a jail interview, portions of which were

Photo by HARRIS Page 7

Port Richey sets up its own hearing process

■ The plan changes some code violations from criminal to civil offenses so those cases won't have to go through the court system.

By BETH GLENN
Times Staff Writer

PORT RICHEY — The City Council adopted new procedures Tuesday that take code violations and appeals out of the county court system.
"We're taking these violations out of the criminal arena and making them civil offenses," City Manager Vince Lupo said. "And we're establishing a hearing master for the appeals process."
Infractions ranging from excessive noise-making to illegal parking violate city code. Before the changes, only police officers could issue citations to violators, and those citations were enforced by the county courts.

New hearing officials and police officers can issue citations and fines up to \$500. Disputes over those citations will be settled by a code enforcement special master hired by the city.
Otherwise, the special master will be called in if a resident does not pay the fines levied or correct the offenses in a timely manner.

City Attorney Paul Marino said the changes reflect a trend to decriminalize offenses such as reported false alarms and failing to obtain proper occupational permits.

Some of the most significant penalty changes relate to parking fines, which were raised from \$5 to \$15 with a grace period of 10 days to pay. Illegal parking fines will be referred to the county tax collector and collected when licenses are renewed.

In addition, vehicle-repair companies such as auto and non-emergency ambulance services must pay a \$20 fee before getting a certificate of public convenience and need.

City Attorney Paul Marino said the changes reflect a trend to decriminalize offenses such as reported false alarms and failing to obtain proper occupational permits.

Since the court system has shown little interest in code violation cases, city officials said, they decided to set up their own hearing process. Lupo said the special master would likely be a retired judge or a professional whose services coincided with the dispute but who worked in a neighboring county.

Heart attack claims owner of Sam's at Hudson Beach

By BETH GLENN
Times Staff Writer

HUDSON BEACH — Enrico "Eddie" Marini, who owned and operated Sam's Hudson Beach snack bar for 17 years, died Tuesday after suffering a heart attack.

Marini, 51, was taken to Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point on Tuesday morning after he awoke with chest pains. Doctors tried twice to restart his heart.

"Everyone in Hudson and Pasco is going to miss this guy," said Bruce Hermann, who knew Marini for about eight years and met his former wife at Sam's. "He was a ball of a nice guy, and he put his heart and soul into that place."

Marini's restaurant has become a local landmark where customers come for vital nutrients, spicy wings and cold beer.
"Everything is as 'the only place in Hudson to hang out'," Hermann, gives high marks to Sam's "good food, good beer and good times with nice Florida hospitality."

Marini, who was born in Italy, could often be found working alongside his wife, Grace, and daughter, Sara, at the restaurant that grew to personally his owner.

"Sam's was a stress factor, but it was him," his wife said. "It was his baby, something he raised up and created. Everything about him went into that place."
My husband was a worker and he believed in doing things to the utmost. There was not a person who came on that deck he didn't try to please."

Enrico Wright, 17, just began working at the restaurant but has known the Marinis as family friends most of her life.
"He was a great guy to work for," Wright said. "Sunday, he had the hand there and he was talking and laughing. He told me to come back at 5 on Tuesday."

But when Wright arrived, the restaurant was closed and remained closed to all but family and close friends Wednesday.
Family members said Sam's might reopen in about four business days.

"We're going to try to maintain what was done over there and try to maintain on the same level we always did," Mrs. Marini said. "We're short a lot of backhouse support here now, but we have our daughter, Sara, who's been working there since she was 11."

Photo by HARRIS Page 7



Enrico "Eddie" Marini owned Sam's Hudson Beach Snack Bar, described by a patron as "the only place in Hudson to hang out."

TIMES DIGEST

Witness reports seeing missing woman

HUDSON — Authorities have found a witness who reported seeing Nancy Anne on U.S. 79 near the place where a piece of her finger was later discovered. The new information advances the investigation into the missing woman's fate, officials said.
The witness said he saw Anne, a 39-year-old Oklawaha woman, walking north on the road near New York Avenue between 3 and 4 p.m. on April 11, said Sheriff's office spokesman Jim Powers. The top third of her right little finger was found on the side of the road April 16. Until the new witness was found, the last sighting of Anne had been on April 10 near the Bay Lark Tavern on State Road 52. The new information "brings us 24 hours closer," Powers said. "I wouldn't classify it as a quantum leap in any way, but every little bit helps." Anyone with information in the case is asked to call Detective Jeff Boyington at (813) 847-0678, ext. 3427.

Utility officials ally employees' fears

Employees at water production plants say they are concerned about losing their jobs when local governments transfer ownership of the facilities to the new water utility. But utility officials say no jobs are in jeopardy and they expect the new utility to create jobs. SECTION