

# THE BRIDGE

**NEW PORT  
RICHEY**  
CLASSIC. FLORIDA. CURRENT.

cityofnewportrichey.org

14th Edition | April 2023

## CENTENNIAL Celebration



One of New Port Richey's First Chasco Parades.  
Photo provided courtesy of the West Pasco  
Historical Society

### IMPORTANT DATES In NPR History

1915  
**Post Office** is established

1919  
**Avery Library** applies for  
incorporation, opens  
formally in 1920

March 1922  
The **First Chasco Fiesta** is held

September 1922  
**Gulf High School** opens

1924  
New Port Richey incorporated,  
**Dr. Elroy M. Avery**  
is the **first mayor**

1926  
**Meighan Theatre/Richey**  
**Suncoast Theatre** opens

1927  
**Hacienda Hotel** opens

► The City of New Port Richey will celebrate its **Centennial Anniversary on October 27, 2024!** To mark this momentous occasion, the City is organizing a steering committee to plan and oversee the event. Interested persons must be a city resident 18 years or older or own a business within city limits for at least six months. Preferred candidates will have a working knowledge of the city and a demonstrated ability to work effectively as a member of a decision-making team. To apply, submit a letter of interest to the City Clerk by May 15, 2023. The letter should include a summary of your skills and qualifications that would be an asset to the steering committee. The letters may be submitted via electronic mail to [meyersj@cityofnewportrichey.org](mailto:meyersj@cityofnewportrichey.org) or mailed to the City Clerk's Office, 5919 Main Street, New Port Richey, Florida, 34652.

Those selected to be on the steering committee will be notified in late June. Meetings of the steering committee will begin in early September. A formal meeting schedule will be finalized once the committee has been established.

### Centennial Celebration LOGO DESIGN CONTEST

► The City of New Port Richey is looking for an artist to create a unique logo for its upcoming Centennial Celebration. The logo will be used on all advertising and promotional materials for the event. The logo requirements are as follows:

- **Must contain the words "City of New Port Richey"**
- **Must have 100th Anniversary or numbers 100 incorporated in the logo**
- **Must be in PNG or JPG format**

Artists may submit their logos electronically to City Clerk Judy Meyers at [meyersj@cityofnewportrichey.org](mailto:meyersj@cityofnewportrichey.org) by September 1, 2023. The City Council will review all submissions and choose the winner. The winning artist will be recognized at an upcoming City Council meeting and receive a \$150 Publix gift card. **For more information, please contact City Clerk Judy Meyers at 727.853.1021.**

**ENTER TO WIN!**  
**ENTER TO WIN!**  
**ENTER TO WIN!**

# MAYOR'S LETTER

Greetings, Friends:

It has been my pleasure to have served as your mayor for the last nine years. I won't claim credit for all the changes in New Port Richey, as it has most definitely been a group effort. I challenged my colleagues on city council the night I was sworn in as mayor in 2014 by stating that I was not satisfied with the state of our city and that we could make things better. The City Council unanimously shared that vision, and the results have been amazing.

We reimagined Sims Park and worked to turn the park into the jewel of downtown New Port Richey. We added shade structures, a splash pad, a new playground, and Orange Lake boardwalks that get used year-round. The City's investment in the park showed property and business owners that their elected officials were serious about revitalization. Shortly thereafter, the historic downtown business district went from a 50% occupancy to nearly full. As the downtown became busier, small-scale events on Railroad Square drew more foot traffic. Combining these small-scale events and low-impact park events, such as free monthly concerts and movies in the park, means there is always something to do downtown.

We found the right developer to give the Hacienda Hotel the love and investment necessary to return the hotel to operation. With the support of hundreds of citizens, locals, and the Friends of the Hacienda, the Hacienda is a spectacular addition. The roads leading to these additions became re-paved due to the highly popular pavement management program which put 100% of the paving assessments toward the asphalt. Additionally, in March, we approved the River Road renovation which will slow down traffic with narrower traffic lanes. In addition, wider sidewalks will be added, so people can safely use wheelchairs and mobility devices or comfortably walk side-by-side. I hope this becomes a model for future paving projects.

The Palm District is returning to life with the opening of Keiser University, Stonehaven, and multiple businesses in between. The Palm District will flourish, expanding its vibrancy to US 19 as those businesses continue making improvements. There is still plenty to do to make our city everything it can be, but I am confident that the new mayor will take up the gavel and help keep this great city moving forward.

Thank you for allowing me to be your mayor these past nine years. Thank you also to my colleagues on the city council, the city manager, and the city staff who helped make things happen during my time as mayor. We've seen a lot of progress, and I firmly believe that New Port Richey's best days are ahead!

Sincerely,

Rob Marlowe  
Former Mayor

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RICHEY**  
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## City Staff Profile

► "If you have ever worked with **Steve Golubeff**, you know a city employee that is enthusiastic about his job and doesn't shy away from challenging work," according to City Manager Debbie Manns. Steve began his employment with the city in March of 2005 as a Maintenance Worker I in the Parks Maintenance Division and has been promoted several times during his tenure. He currently serves as a Field Supervisor in the Public Works Department and has responsibility for the maintenance of Streets/Rights-Of-Way and Stormwater.

Steve is responsible for specific work involving stormwater pipe clearing, flood control projects, stormwater management, tree and street maintenance, road closures, and crowd barricades. In addition, Steve assists in designing and constructing the City Council's float in parades and coordinating set up and break down of major special events.

"It is a regular occurrence to receive compliments about Steve from residents and members of the

business community after having occasion to work with him," says Robert Rivera, Public Works Director. "Steve is a man of great humility. He attributes a job well done to his team." In response, Steve says, "If it weren't for my staff being team players and working well together, I wouldn't have been able to achieve the accomplishments for which I have been recognized, so I am grateful for the team and their efforts."

In addition to Steve's devotion to the City, he is the proud husband to his wife, Nadalie, and father to his three children, Felicia, Ellie, and Andrew. Steve and Nadalie welcomed their first grandson, Avery, earlier this year. In his spare time, Steve likes trying new grill recipes, working on classic cars and attending car shows with his father, and taking his family to Sims Park to admire the night sky.



## Welcome CHIEF KOCHEN

► After nearly ten years of loyal and dedicated service, New Port Richey Police Chief Kim Bogart has officially retired. With the retirement of Chief Bogart, an appointment was made by the City Manager on January 27, 2023, for Robert Kochen to serve as the City's next Police Chief.

Chief Kochen became a sworn Florida law enforcement officer in 1988 and served the Tarpon Springs Police Department for over 32 years. He has over 21 years of police command-level experience and was the Chief of Police for Tarpon Springs for over ten years.

During his tenure with Tarpon Springs, Chief Kochen successfully obtained the Police Department's first accreditation status with the State of Florida. According to City Manager Debbie L. Manns, "Chief Kochen has earned a wealth of the required competencies for this position. However, his gift for tact and decisiveness in the execution of the position responsibilities made him distinct as a candidate."

Chief Kochen has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Tampa College and a master's degree in business administration from Florida Metropolitan University. In addition, he graduated from the Southern Police Institute Command Officers Development Course at the University of Louisville.



Chief Kochen was pinned by his daughter, Nikaila, who follows her Father's example as a public servant.

Chief Kochen is a lifetime member of the Florida Police Chiefs Association and the International Association of Chiefs of Police. In addition, he was past president and remains a lifetime member of the Tampa Bay Area Chiefs of Police Association.

Chief Kochen has strong family beliefs and has been married to his wife, Michelle, for over 27 years. Together they have two adult children. The Chief and his wife are longtime residents of the New Port Richey area.

Chief Kochen feels there is no real finish line to success and will continue to provide excellent service to this city and its residents.



# CITY MANAGER'S LETTER

Dear Neighbors:

The principal intent of the city newsletter is to provide you with insight into city projects and initiatives as well as important dates. I hope you enjoy this issue and take advantage of opportunities to attend a public meeting or special event, volunteer to serve on a board or committee, or visit an improved park.

The secondary reason for the city newsletter is to promote government transparency and provide information you need to engage effectively with the city. It is important that residents and members of the business community have opportunities to be involved and informed. When we share our viewpoints, the result is always enhanced and likely more reflective of the community we serve.

It is also important to note that feedback from our community can help improve our services. So please consider providing feedback so we can gauge when kind words deserve to be passed along or where modifications need to be implemented in practice, process, or procedure. Although you may email me directly with your comments at [mannsd@cityofnewportrichey.org](mailto:mannsd@cityofnewportrichey.org), if you prefer, you may also fill out a customer service postcard. The cards are available at the reception desk in each of the city's municipal buildings.

In this edition, you will learn about the city's budget planning process, which kicks off in April and will span into September 2023. The city's budget planning process is a stimulating time of year as the City Council establishes goals and major performance objectives such as determining and adopting the annual budget, deciding upon what level of services to provide and how they will be financed, setting appropriate tax levies, and establishing other general service rates.

This edition also contains information about the planning underway for the City's Centennial Anniversary on October 24, 2024. If you are interested, consider submitting a letter of interest to serve on this important steering committee. Also, if you have artistic talent, consider entering the Centennial Logo Design Contest!

As we move closer to the warmer months, I wish you and your families all the best of what summer brings!

Sincerely,

Debbie L. Manns  
City Manager



## OPEN BURNING A FRIENDLY REMINDER

As the Fire Chief, I think it is timely to remind residents who are clearing out unwanted vegetation and sprucing up their exterior landscaping that open burning is prohibited within the city limits. This includes flammable items such as trash and yard debris, trees, palmetto stumps, or other items of a like nature. All current waste haulers

will collect yard debris as part of your regularly scheduled pickup as long as it is separated from other forms of waste. The City also offers yard debris pickup to assist residents. Find the schedule on the home page of the City's website. **Thank you for your continued effort in keeping our community safe and beautiful.**



## Fabulously Fun PROGRAMS for FAMILIES

The City's Recreation and Aquatic Center (RAC) and Public Library are pleased to announce special Spring and Summer programs for April, May and June. Each week, there are many engaging opportunities designed for all ages and abilities at these facilities, and everyone is invited to take part.

Whether it's an **Earth Day Celebration, Walking Club, Speed Friending, Kids to Parks Day, Touch-a-Truck, Swimming Lessons, or Summer Camp**, there's something for everyone!

<b>April 22</b>	5:30-7:30 pm	Earth Day Celebration	Sims Park
	8 pm	Family Movie Night	Sims Park
<b>April 27</b>	6:30 pm	Speed Friending for Gen Z	NPR Public Library
<b>May 5</b>	5:30 pm	Jeff Randall Riverside Concert	Sims Park by Frederick Grassin (Main Street) Bridge
<b>May 6</b>	9 am	Kids to Parks Day	James E. Grey Preserve
<b>May 14</b>	noon	Mother's Day Mommy and Me	RAC
<b>May 16</b>	5:30 pm	Master Gardeners Present: Florida Friendly Landscaping	NPR Public Library
<b>May 18</b>	5:30 pm	Jazz Phools Concert	NPR Public Library
<b>June 3</b>	10 am - 1 pm	Summer Kick-off Touch-a-Truck	NPR Public Library
<b>Tuesdays</b>	9 am- 1 pm	Tasty Tuesdays Market	NPR Public Library

June marks the start of summer fun with a full line-up of classes, events, and fun offered by the Library and Recreation and Aquatic Center (RAC). Kick off the summer with the Library's annual Touch-a-Truck on June 3 from 10 am to 1 pm. Then, cool down at the (RAC) by taking swim lessons or registering children ages 5-12 years for eight weeks of field trips and fun activities at summer camp.

Visit the City of New Port Richey's website at [www.cityofnewportrichey.org](http://www.cityofnewportrichey.org) for highlighted events.

For more information about the Recreation and Aquatic Center's Summer Camp, swimming classes, or many other activities, call 727.841.4560.

For more information about the Public Library's classes, concerts, and Special Summer Reading Events, call 727.853.1279.



Over the past four years, pickleball has become the fastest-growing recreational sport with nearly five million people playing pickleball across the country and in New Port Richey.

Pickleball is a cross between tennis, ping pong, and badminton, played on a 20'x 44' court. The Recreation and Aquatic Center offers two outdoor and six indoor courts. The City plans to add three more outdoor courts at Meadows Park as part of the overall park improvement project.

For more information, please contact the Recreation and Aquatic Center at 727.841.4560

# BUDGET SEASON

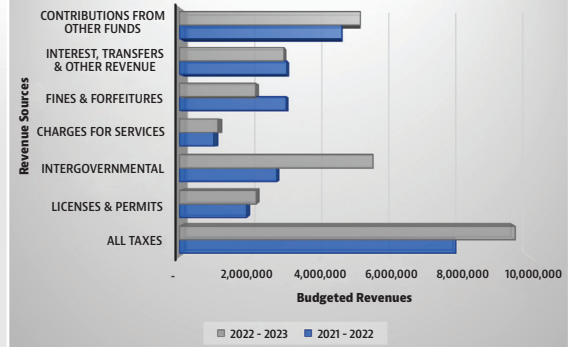
As budget season approaches, the City begins analyzing the financial and operational performance of the various departments. The budget is a valuation tool comparing commitments made in the previous year's budget with actual accomplishments. Planning and budgeting leaders across the City will collaborate to reevaluate future goals and expectations. Input from the community and direction from the City Council is used in the data collection process. Each department's mission statement reflects goals and objectives obtained through the fiscal budget.

Many municipalities face challenges in financial planning due to the years-long pandemic, shrinking revenues, limited resources, and

long-range planning for capital projects. However, the City's continuous efforts in fostering a business-friendly community has increased property values and attracts many to the downtown area.

The City's General Revenues for FY2022-2023 totaled \$28,608,300, an increase of 10% from the prior year. The City's millage rate was lowered from 8.5000 to 8.4500 for FY23. As the City strives to reduce the property tax rate, anticipated increases in property values allow for future development and capital projects. The City seeks innovative ways to collaborate with other local municipalities and developers to share costs in projects that will help in the development of the City.

## GENERAL FUND REVENUE SOURCES



In April, we will begin the budgeting process. Stay tuned to the City's website and calendar for upcoming budgeting work sessions and public hearings that residents can attend to better understand the City of New Port Richey's spending plan for the forthcoming year.

## Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ PROGRAM



Have you ever seen someone apply lawn fertilizer before it rains or an irrigation system operating while it is raining? When asked, most people are just trying to be conscious about water conservation. Unfortunately, while their intention is good, using fertilizers creates a risk of contributing to adverse effects such as cattail overgrowth or algae blooms.

As part of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (NPDES), the City tries to educate property owners about eco-friendly practices by establishing ordinances that regulate using fertilizers. The City's Florida Friendly Landscaping Ordinance establishes minimum standards for developing, installing, and maintaining landscaped areas without inhibiting creative design.

**The City encourages residents and business owners to review the ordinances. A summary is below:**

- Fertilizer application is prohibited, even in slow-release formulation, during the summer rainy season, typically June 1 to September 30.
- Fertilizers containing nitrogen shall not be applied before seeding or sodding a site and shall not be applied for the first 30 days after seeding or sodding.
- Rain shut-off switch equipment is required on automatic irrigation systems to avoid irrigation during sufficient soil moistures. Equipment must consist of an automatic sensing device that will override the irrigation cycle of the sprinkler system when adequate rainfall has occurred.

Links to the current ordinances may be found at [www.cityofnewportrichey.org/city-departments/public-works/public-works-programs/florida-friendly-landscaping/](http://www.cityofnewportrichey.org/city-departments/public-works/public-works-programs/florida-friendly-landscaping/)

## NEIGHBORHOOD Spring Clean-Up



The City of New Port Richey will host a Spring Neighborhood Clean-Up Day on Saturday, May 20th from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Make the most of this time to properly dispose of unwanted items and help keep our City beautiful. Dumpsters will be placed at Frances Avenue Park, 5580 Frances Avenue and at the former old River Road Church Property, 6131 South River Road. A current Florida Driver's License or City utility bill proving residence within the City of New Port Richey will be required to dispose of unwanted items. An on-site paper shredder will be located at the River Road site for residents to dispose of unwanted paper. Residents may view the list of allowable materials on the City's website at [www.citynpr.org](http://www.citynpr.org)

**Residents may contact the Public Works Department at 727.841.4536 for questions regarding the event.**

## Your City Council

(L-R)

Deputy Mayor, Mike Peters

[Petersm@cityofnewportrichey.org](mailto:Petersm@cityofnewportrichey.org)

Councilperson, Pete Altman

[Altmanp@cityofnewportrichey.org](mailto:Altmanp@cityofnewportrichey.org)

Mayor, Rob Marlowe (until 4.11.2023)

[Marlower@cityofnewportrichey.org](mailto:Marlower@cityofnewportrichey.org)

Councilperson, Matt Murphy

[Murphyrm@cityofnewportrichey.org](mailto:Murphyrm@cityofnewportrichey.org)

Councilperson, Kelly Mothershead

[Mothersheadk@cityofnewportrichey.org](mailto:Mothersheadk@cityofnewportrichey.org)







# Development Projects in the *Future* of New Port Richey

February 2023

## Anchor at Gulf Harbors

*Developer - Dominion*

► A rezoning of approximately 277 acres located on the east side of Sea Forest Drive was approved by the City Council in February for a Planned Development District (PDD).

This development will consist of 388 apartment units in one five-story building designed for use by senior residents. Site amenities will include outdoor activity areas (bocce, kitchen area, firepit, pool, and deck area), exterior site lighting, bike racks and benches along walking paths through conservation areas and sculpted and landscaped retention ponds (pictured above).

## Aqua Harbor Project

*Developer - Simone Development & Management, Inc.*

This proposed development involves the demolition of the Magnuson Hotel. In its place, two separate buildings containing a total of 96 condominium units and an additional building for a 92-room hotel will be constructed. The site is approximately 3.67 acres on the southwest side of US Highway 19 and Marine Parkway.

The planned amenities for the condominium complex include outdoor activity areas (bocce, dog park, pickleball, pool and patio area), exterior site lighting and benches along a walkway adjacent to the existing canal and docks. Planned hotel amenities include an elevated deck area and a meeting/event space.



At this time, it is projected that the demolition of the existing hotel will commence in May 2023. The condominium units will be constructed first, and they will be built one building at a time. The projected taxable value of the condominiums is \$25.4 million with the completion of both buildings. The 92-unit hotel has a projected taxable value of \$6.1 million.

## Aqua Reserve Townhomes

*Project Developer - Hudson Bay Developers, LLC*

This project consisting of 32 townhomes on approximately 15 acres located on the south side of Sea Forest Drive, south of Seagull Drive, is planned to begin construction this summer.

This will be a gated community. Site amenities will include an outdoor common space area containing the following amenities: bocce, pickleball, a pool and deck area, a clubhouse, sculpted and landscaped retention ponds, a putting green, conservation areas, and access to an adjacent canal and existing boat docks.





## CITY OF NEW PORT RICHEY

5919 Main Street | New Port Richey, FL 34652

PRSRT STD  
ECRWSS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
EDDM RETAIL

Local  
Postal Customer

## KNOX HOMEBOX Campaign

► The City of New Port Richey Fire Department is launching a Residential Knox Home Box Campaign. You may have seen a version of the Knox Box on many commercial buildings in the city, and the Residential Knox Home Box is an extension of that service. The Knox Home Box is a key safe that stores a key to a residential property. The box is mounted outside the residence and, just like the commercial Knox Box, can be unlocked only by the Fire Department when Firefighter-Paramedics need rapid entry into the home. During an emergency, this voluntary alternative allows first responders to enter without forcing entry, delaying entry, or not entering.

If you are over 65, live in the city limits, are mobility challenged, and have a medical alert system or history of medical issues, you may be eligible for a free Residential Knox Home Box. If you believe you may qualify, submit an application. The City has a limited number of the Knox Home Boxes for residents to install themselves. The boxes are available on loan and free of charge until the homeowner moves.

**In addition, residents can purchase a Knox Home Box with the City of New Port Richey Keyway online at [www.knoxbox.com](http://www.knoxbox.com). For more information, please call the Fire Administration office at 727.853.1032.**

When seconds matter  
in an emergency  
trust Knox.



## Advisory Council Promotes Expanded Local Food Sources

*With excerpts from The Laker/Lutz News  
January 2, 2023, By BC Manion*

► When the Food Policy Advisory Council came into existence in May 2015, it was among the first in the state, according to Dell DeChant, the council's chairman. "That's a point of pride," DeChant said, adding that the council's purpose is to support an equitable, resilient and local food system throughout the entirety of Pasco County.

DeChant and Sonide Simon, a planner II for Pasco, stated a robust local food system "can dramatically reduce instances of chronic disease and obesity, preserve agricultural lands, promote agricultural uses and assist in the development of new businesses in the food sector."

### Through their work, the Food Policy Council also aims to:

- Support the development and expansion of locally produced foods
- Review proposed legislation and regulations that affect the food system
- Make recommendations to government bodies
- Inform others by sharing information regarding community food systems

The council has had some influence, thanks to the backing of both the Pasco County Commission and the City of New Port Richey's City Council, DeChant said. Each of these government boards has staff that actively serve on the food council. Both government entities also supported the food council's recommendation to the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council to include an item related to local food systems in its resiliency plan.