

THE BRIDGE

**NEW PORT
RICHEY**
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cityofnewportrichey.org

15th Edition | January 2024

City of New Port Richey to **IMPLEMENT SINGLE-HAULER WASTE REMOVAL AGREEMENT**

After several years of research surrounding solid waste collection systems—considering factors like service quality, economics, and overall community impact—the City of New Port Richey has concluded that partnering with a single waste collection service provider for all solid waste, yard debris, and recycling services within city limits will prove the most universally favorable option for residents and businesses.

Upon implementation of this change in early 2024, we anticipate many positive impacts on our community, including:

- **Reduced Road Damage:** Consolidating waste collection with a single company following a specific route decreases the transit of vehicles, preserving road safety and maintenance by minimizing wear and tear.
- **Improved Air Quality:** Fewer diesel trucks mean reduced exhaust fumes, lowering our carbon footprint and improving the quality of the air we breathe.
- **Fewer Noise Disturbances:** Shifting to a consolidated waste hauler schedule minimizes disruptions for residents and businesses, particularly for those who are retired or caring for young children at home.

Out of many options, the City elected to contract with Waste Pro of Florida d.b.a. J.D. Parker and Sons, a business with local roots and over 75 years of service in our city. Its origins trace back to 1949 when John Henry Parker started hauling trash for his neighbors in the back of his pickup truck for a quarter a can.



“We’re the oldest waste hauler in Pasco, and we’ve been here in New Port Richey since the beginning,” says Dave Parker, Division Manager of J.D. Parker & Sons. “We’re extremely connected to this city, so this partnership holds a lot of meaning for us.”

According to City Manager Debbie L. Manns, “J.D. Parker and Sons is a standout business in our community—not only for their long-standing history of service to our city, but also for their exceptional customer service and strong business ethics.”

The company’s commitment to top-notch service is evident in its recent investments in state-of-the-art equipment to support this partnership. It is also backed by a pledge to remain an accessible local business.

“I think we’re a great fit for the city because we have access to big resources, but we’re still a local business with an open-door policy,” Parker adds. “If you have a question or an issue, call us or come into the office...we’ll always be there to help.”

The partnership is scheduled to go into effect on March 2, 2024. No service registration or cancellation of existing services is needed to facilitate this change.

You will receive a letter in advance of the start date with more details, and additional information will be available online at www.cityofnewportrichey.org/solid-waste/.

**NEW
PORT
RICHEY
TURNS
100**

As the city continues its journey of growth and progress, our upcoming 100th anniversary stands as a momentous occasion to reflect on our incredible transformation over the years.

To showcase the community’s vibrant achievements, a steering committee composed of dedicated residents will help plan events that celebrate this significant milestone.

We invite you to join us as we honor our past, celebrate our present, and embark on the next chapter of New Port Richey’s storied history! Stay tuned for more details!

MAIN STREET THEN & NOW



CITY MANAGER'S LETTER

Dear Neighbors,

As we embark upon a new year, I am filled with anticipation for the promise of what's to come. We have many enhancements planned for our city, and I hope you share in my excitement.

In this issue of *The Bridge*, you'll get a glimpse into some newly opened and soon-to-open businesses. These ongoing developments contribute to the vibrance of our downtown and make our city an even more enticing place to visit and reside.

The new year kicks off our centennial anniversary celebrations. New Port Richey has made a remarkable transformation, and I look forward to reflecting on its progress and development over the decades as we mark this historic occasion. Keep an eye out for details surrounding festivities.

Furthermore, I'm proud to recognize some outstanding efforts of City employees who are making a real difference in our community, including our Code Enforcement officers who led an impactful volunteer effort, a Public Works employee whose consistently exemplary efforts deserve recognition, and members of our Police Department who have dedicated a new unit to helping people facing personal crises. Our city is home to exceptional individuals devoted to serving and safeguarding our community, and it's an honor to work alongside them.

Lastly, I want to invite all community members to engage in shaping the growth of our city. Within the pages of this newsletter, you can learn more about our Citizens Academy program—an excellent opportunity to delve into our city's inner workings—along with opportunities to participate in boards, committees, or volunteer organizations like the Friends of Parks and Recreation or Friends of the Library groups. These groups play a pivotal role in our city, offering valuable perspectives that enable the City of New Port Richey to make well-informed choices.

Our city's vibrancy and daily progress fuel my anticipation for our community's future. I urge you all to engage in the multitude of offerings our city presents—whether it's enjoying our local parks and facilities, patronizing our diverse businesses, or participating in our future development by joining a city board or committee. Our city's potential is immense, and with the active involvement of our community, I'm confident it will only flourish further.

Wishing you all joy and prosperity throughout the year ahead!

Warm regards,

Debbie L. Manns
City Manager

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Citizens Academy Corner

► Congratulations to the young graduates of the Junior Citizens Academy! Inspired by the City's successful Citizens Academy Program, the Library's weekly Homeschool Meetup Group was introduced to the various roles and responsibilities of city government when they toured city departments and facilities, including the police and fire stations, the Recreation and Aquatic Center, and the water reclamation facility. They also had the opportunity to meet Mayor Davis and engage in a mock City Council meeting at City Hall.



Citizens Academy ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

► **Launi Schmutz-Harden**, a dedicated contributor to local government for over three decades in Utah, brought her enthusiasm for community involvement to New Port Richey upon her relocation in 2021.

When she read about the Citizens Academy in an edition of *The Bridge*, she saw it as a chance to connect with locals and officials while delving into local governance. She enrolled for the spring 2022 class, during which she and her peers explored city operations, met officials and toured facilities.

One of the departments explored was Parks and Recreation.



"I learned about the impactful work they were doing for our youth and community," she recalls, "and I felt inspired to contribute to that positive influence."

Since graduating, Schmutz-Harden has become a vital bridge between the City and the community through her service on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board — a role influenced by her valuable experiences in the Citizens Academy program.

"This program offers something for everyone," she emphasizes. "Whether you're a newcomer, volunteer, business owner, or curious citizen, it's the best way to understand our community and gain the confidence needed to actively contribute to its growth."

Learning how a city operates is beneficial for all its residents. When you join our Citizens Academy program, you gain firsthand insight into the inner workings of our local government, empowering you to become a more engaged participant in our community's growth.

Enrollment for our spring class of the Citizens Academy for adults is NOW OPEN!

To learn more, visit us online at:
www.cityofnewportriches.org/city-departments/city-clerk/citizens-academy

BECOME A FRIEND OF PARKS & RECREATION



► Parks and open spaces are vital to a community's aesthetic, social, and economic well-being. For this reason, many local governments have organized nonprofit groups—sometimes called *friends groups*—to actively support their parks systems and recreation programs' daily activities, long-term projects, fundraising efforts, and much more.

Friends groups are important links to local communities and can be forceful stakeholders during improvement planning.

"They also help to develop a sense of stewardship among the membership and others by giving back to the community," adds City Manager Debbie L. Manns.

To foster community engagement within our public spaces and facilities, the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board seeks passionate

individuals to champion the Friends of Parks & Recreation initiative.

"The opportunities provided by Parks and Recreation are vast," remarks David Schrader, Chairman of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. "A friends group will play a pivotal role in raising awareness of all we have to offer while shaping the city's future direction."

Andre Julien, Director of Parks & Recreation, emphasizes, "The spaces we maintain are invaluable community assets. With the involvement of 'friends' who share our mission, we can further cultivate a vibrant, connected, and thriving community."

To get involved in shaping the future of these spaces and resources, please get in touch with Parks and Recreation Director Andre Julien at juliena@cityofnewportriches.org.

MAYOR'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

I'm thrilled to connect with you through this edition of *The Bridge*, which holds a particular significance to me— not only because there are so many exciting updates to share as we enter the new year, but also because it's my first time addressing you in this newsletter as the mayor of our great city.

Significant growth has defined our community in the past decade, and you may rest assured that the momentum we've created is only getting stronger. The city council, city manager, and I share a vision for swift and continuous improvement, aiming to further develop a community that delights its visitors, supports its businesses, and ensures its residents are proud to call it home.

As we embrace the cooler weather and the beginning of a new year, we can anticipate many great things in the months ahead.

For one, we will commemorate the 100th anniversary of our city's founding. We have several events planned to honor our history and progress, and I hope you'll share my excitement for these celebrations.

I am also pleased to announce that our Public Works Department is implementing a single-hauler system for solid waste removal, effective March 2, 2024. Extensive research has proven that this system will offer the greatest advantages for our community and its residents, and I encourage you to read more about it on the cover of this newsletter.

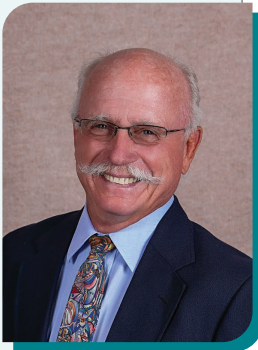
Lastly, numerous health and safety improvements are unfolding in our community. In this edition of *The Bridge*, you can learn more about these projects, including our Fire Department's collaboration with the American Red Cross and the installation of a state-of-the-art health kiosk in our library. These initiatives drive us toward a singular objective: to make our city a healthier and safer place to visit, work, and live.

As we usher in all the progress that the new year has in store, I wish you all the best for 2024!

Sincerely,

Chopper Davis
Mayor

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What's New & What's Next?

► New businesses and developments are popping up all over our downtown area! We encourage you to shop, dine and explore everything our flourishing business community offers.

Here's a look at **What's New** in Downtown New Port Richey:

SteamWorks Pub Railroad Square's latest addition brings an exciting and inviting new atmosphere for craft cocktails and great eats.

MADE Artisan Hall Find one-of-a-kind gifts at this newly opened hub for specialty and hand-crafted goods curated by local artisans.

Estuary Estuary, led by Chef James Renew, prioritizes freshness with local, seasonal ingredients. Experience this carefully crafted menu and a refined yet relaxed atmosphere.

Zen Kitchen & Bar In its location on Grand Blvd., Zen Kitchen & Bar has a vibrant look and feel. Explore their Asian-fusion menu, crafted by Chef Victor Wang.

Emerald Coast Brewing Co. This new craft brewery on Main Street is serving up its own creations alongside a variety of local favorites.

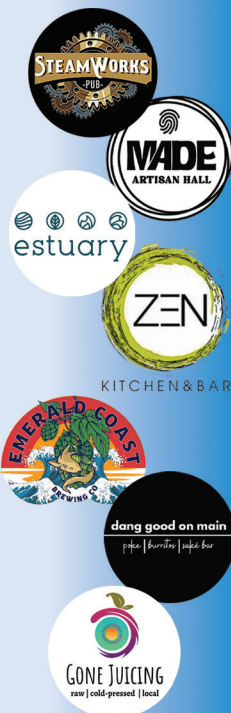
What's Next

Dang Good on Main Expanding from their successful sushi spot, Ashly and Patrick Dang are introducing an all-new restaurant to Main Street, promising a diverse menu that caters to all palates.

Gone Juicing Café Driven by a mission to bridge the gap between healthy and tasty, this family-owned café is opening a location on the corner of Main Street and Florida Ave. Gone Juicing Café will be another great stop for fresh foods that fuel every lifestyle.

DART Around Town

The Downtown Area Roundabout Trolley (DART) carried a record 3,500 passengers this year. Hop aboard to check out these businesses and more on the DART's newly expanded downtown route!



New L.I.F.T.
UNIT
ELEVATES
LOCALS
FACING
HARDSHIPS

► In 2023, the New Port Richey Police Department introduced its **Life Improvement Facilitation Team (L.I.F.T.)**, a unit dedicated to assisting members of our community who are facing personal crises and hardships. In the six months since its launch, L.I.F.T. has helped repair family relationships, has distributed essential items like toiletries, snacks, and clothing, and has proactively addressed unlawful loitering in the city. Plans for this unit involve organizing community outreach events and maintaining a strong partnership with BayCare Health Systems, a crucial ally in supporting the city's vulnerable populations.

INVOLVED

JOIN a
BOARD
OR
COMMITTEE

► To tap into the wealth of skills, experience, and interest within our community, the City Council and Staff of the City of New Port Richey utilize several appointed boards and committees to advise and make recommendations on various issues that impact our quality of life.

Public involvement in these appointed advisory bodies is an essential and valued part of city government. Members of our boards and committees bring new ideas to the table and represent the diversity of our community, giving input to help the City make the best and most informed decisions possible.

WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?
Registered voters who offer expertise in related fields and who reside within City limits are encouraged to apply. More information and applications are available on the City's website at www.cityofnewportrichey.org.

Essential Employee Spotlight:

Martin Field



► **Martin Field, Construction Services Manager for the City**, stands out as a highly knowledgeable and proficient member of the Public Works team.

From utility improvements to streetscape projects, Mr. Field directs in a manner that embodies the City's standard of excellence. For example, his adeptness in handling changing circumstances and his knack for devising inventive solutions were essential to completing the New Port Richey Parking Garage project on time and within budget.

Mr. Field is a sought-after source of guidance for his wisdom and integrity, and his dedication to serving New Port Richey has garnered respect and admiration from the Public Works Department and our community.

"Mr. Martin Field towers above most—both in proficiency and general stature," remarks Assistant Public Works Director Colin Eichenmuller. **"He consistently exceeds expectations, setting new standards and guiding his team effectively, even in emergency repair situations."**

We thank Martin Field for being an exceptional team member, an invaluable project manager, and a remarkable leader who makes everyone proud to work alongside him.

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If you've had an outstanding interaction with any City employee, please share your feedback.

To share your feedback, please complete a comment card located at each City facility or email comments to wharranb@cityofnewportrichey.org.

CITY OFFICIALS

Band Together to Help Neighbors in Need

► Our Code Enforcement officers ensure community safety and quality of life by upholding regulations. However, individuals facing physical or financial limitations may find tasks essential for code compliance—like tree trimming, junk removal, and debris clearance—particularly challenging.

Such was the case for one New Port Richey resident, whose circumstances changed dramatically after her husband passed away. Though the state of her residence harbored multiple code enforcement violations, officers opted for empathy as their guiding course of action.

"Given her scenario, we all wanted to help rather than adding to her stress with fines," says Code Enforcement Manager Erik Jay. "For those who are having a hard time and can't do these things for themselves, lending a hand is the right thing to do."

In support of a neighbor in need, the New Port Richey Police Department and City officials including the chief of police and the city manager worked together to bring the building up to code, including clearing 40 yards of debris, cleaning gutters, trimming trees, eliminating overgrowth, pressure washing, and painting the home. They also went on to identify and support a second home in need, collectively dedicating over 100 volunteer hours to these community enhancement projects.

"I think this is indicative of what we're all working toward here," says City Manager Debbie L. Manns. **"We all want to help because we are committed to ensuring our community is well taken care of."**



▲ City representatives roll up their sleeves to help a homeowner uphold city standards.

"Afterward, to hear people say that this has 'changed their life... that's so impactful," remarks Jay. **"It feels great that with a couple of days' worth of effort, we've made a meaningful difference for these members of our community."**

If you have the time, talent, and passion to give back, call the City Manager's Office at 727.853.1248 to join our volunteer list and stay informed about our community projects.

Your City Council

(L-R)

Councilperson, Mike Peters
Petersm@cityofnewportrichey.org

Mayor, Chopper Davis
Davisc@cityofnewportrichey.org

Councilperson, Kelly Mothershead
Mothersheadk@cityofnewportrichey.org

Councilperson, Pete Altman
Altmanp@cityofnewportrichey.org

Deputy Mayor, Matt Murphy
MurphyM@cityofnewportrichey.org



2024

Mark Your CALENDARS!

There's so much to do in New Port Richey! Save the date for these upcoming events taking place in the city:

JANUARY

Home Show Extravaganza 2024

Jan. 19, 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Jan. 20, 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Recreation & Aquatic Center (Free Admission)

New Port Richey Rotaract's Craft Beer & Wine Festival

Jan. 20, 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Ticket Purchase Required

Sims Park Amphitheater

Concert in the Park:

"All Fired Up" Pat Benatar Tribute

Jan. 27, 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Sims Park Amphitheater (Free Admission)

FEBRUARY

Taste of New Port Richey

Feb. 8, 5:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Ticket Purchase Required – Downtown

Family Daddy Daughter Dance

Feb. 10

Recreation & Aquatic Center

West Pasco Quilters Show

Feb. 16 – 18

Recreation & Aquatic Center

Concert in the Park:

"Girl Can't Help It" Journey Tribute

Feb. 17, 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Sims Park Amphitheater (Free Admission)

Esports Event

Feb. 24

Recreation & Aquatic Center

For more information on classes and activities taking place at the New Port Richey Recreation and Aquatic Center, please call 727.841.4560.

For more information about the Public Library's classes, concerts, and other special events, please call 727.853-1279.

MARCH

March on Main Chalk Fest

Mar. 2

Downtown New Port Richey

Concert in the Park:

"Summer of Love" George Harrison Tribute

Mar. 9, 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Sims Park Amphitheater (Free Admission)

2024 Chasco Fiesta

Friday, Mar. 15 – Saturday, Mar. 23

Downtown New Port Richey and Sims Park

Chasco Fiesta - Boat Parade

Saturday, Mar. 16, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Along the Pithlachascotee River, from Miller Bayou to Sims Park

Chasco Fiesta - Car Show

Sunday, Mar. 17, 7:00 am – 3:00 pm

Downtown New Port Richey

Chasco Fiesta - Street Parade

Saturday, Mar. 23, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Downtown New Port Richey

ONGOING EVENTS

West Pasco Historical Society - Speaker Series

Second Friday of every month

7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Sims Park - Peace Hall

Walk & Talk

Tuesdays, 6:00 pm

New Port Richey Public Library Courtyard

Tasty Tuesdays Local Organic Market

Tuesdays, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

New Port Richey Public Library Courtyard

Backyard Bazaar

First Saturday of every month

6:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Downtown New Port Richey

Beyond these events, the New Port Richey Recreation and Aquatic Center and Public Library offer a variety of opportunities for our residents to connect, learn, and have fun. Whether you want to meet people who share your interests or learn something new like a language or sport, there's something for everyone!

Libraries with Heart



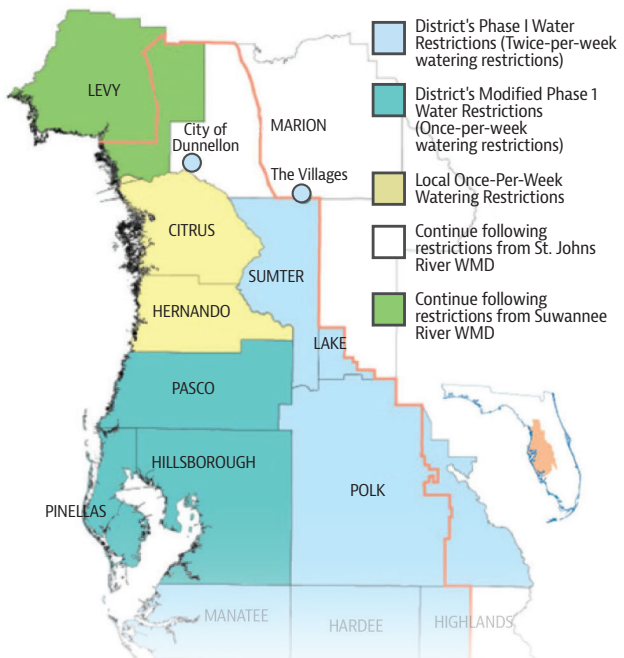
As part of the "Libraries with Heart" initiative, our library is the first in the region to house a cutting-edge health monitoring station donated by BayCare Health Systems and the American Heart Association. Library members can access vital health metrics like weight, BMI, pulse, and blood pressure.

The library is also now lending blood pressure kits and will offer educational classes on cardiac health and more. Stay tuned for more health initiatives in 2024!

WATER RESTRICTION UPDATES

This year, New Port Richey has experienced a significant reduction in annual precipitation. As a result, the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) implemented a Water Shortage Order which imposes water usage restrictions across 15 counties.

For Pasco, a Modified Phase I Order has gone into effect as of December 1st. These restrictions aim to curb "wasteful and unnecessary" water consumption, specifically limiting outdoor irrigation to once per week.



For additional information, please visit www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/business/epermitting/district-water-restrictions.

Recreation and Aquatic Center

[NEW HOURS OF OPERATION]

To meet the changing needs of its members, the Recreation and Aquatics Center has unveiled new hours of operation as of January 2, 2024. These extended hours include more engaging programming and responsive services that cater to a broader audience, further enriching the overall member experience.

NEW HOURS OF OPERATION:

Mon. – Fri. : 5 am – 10 pm | Sat. & Sun.: 8 am – 5 pm

POOL HOURS:

Mon. – Fri. : 10 am – 7 pm | Sat. & Sun.: 10 am – 4:30 pm

Lap pool is closed during water aerobics classes (M,W,F: 10:15 am – 11:15 am) The dive pool, kiddie pool, and slide are closed during the week and throughout the winter season.

CHILD WATCH HOURS:

Mon. – Fri. : 4 pm – 8 pm | Sat. & Sun.: 10 am – 1 pm



CITY OF NEW PORT RICHEY

5919 Main Street | New Port Richey, FL 34652

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FIRE ALARM INITIATIVE

► To add to the many lifesaving services the New Port Richey Fire Department provides, the department has partnered with the American Red Cross to supply and install smoke alarms throughout the community. Through the "Sound the Alarm-Save a Life" Home Fire Campaign, the Fire Department conducted two events this year, installing 234 alarms with 10-year batteries in 129 homes. These measures significantly boost community risk reduction initiatives, emphasizing the crucial role of functional alarms in early fire detection. Looking forward, the department plans to host more smoke alarm events and extend installation services for city residents upon request.

DID YOU KNOW THAT:

- You have just two minutes to escape a home fire
- Seven people die every day on average from home fires in the United States
- Three out of five fire deaths happen in homes with either no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms
- More than 30 people suffer injuries every day on average from home fires in the United States
- The risk of dying in a home fire is cut in half in homes with working smoke alarms



Details about future programs are available on www.cityofnewportrichey.org and www.facebook.com/newportricheyfiredept. For those needing smoke alarms, visit www.redcross.org to complete the "Request a Smoke Alarm" form. Options for the hearing impaired are also available upon request.

UTILITY PAYMENTS, MADE EASY

► As we welcome our sun-seeking residents back to the warmth of our city this winter season, we'd like to remind everyone of the various utility payment options we offer:

AUTOPAY: Bills are paid automatically each month via electronic withdrawal from your bank account, free of charge.

PAY BY TEXT: Automatic payment reminders are sent by text message to your cell phone, and bills can be paid by simply clicking the link sent in the text.

ONLINE: Pay your bill online 24/7 via credit or debit card.

IN-PERSON: Make your payment at City Hall via cash, check, money order or credit card.

PAY BY MAIL: Mail your check or money order directly to the Water Department at 5919 Main Street, New Port Richey, FL 34652.

AMSCOT: Pay in-person at your local Amscot branch.

Whether you are a year-round resident or are returning to our city from out-of-state, our goal is to ensure that your bill payments are seamless and hassle-free.

For more information, visit us online at www.cityofnewportrichey.org/online-bill-pay/.