



# VENICE CITY SCENE

August 2016

A Publication for the Employees of the City of Venice, Florida

Venice City Scene is published by email. Please send news items to Public Information Officer Lorraine Anderson at [landerson@venicegov.com](mailto:landerson@venicegov.com).

## It's summertime!



The City Clerk's Office held an "Americana/Picnic/BBQ"-themed pot-luck lunch on July 18 in Community Hall, with participants at right. At left, Steve Buczak, IT support technician, mans the grill.



Dishes included Debbie Briggs' seven-layer salad, Mercedes Barcia's guava cheesecake, and Kathy Millspaugh's strawberry shortcake and blueberry dessert, left.

## Life jacket loaner station installed



As Venice Police Chief Tom Mattmuller, left, and Capt. Craig Marcum, owner of Sea Tow Venice, right, look on at the July 8 ribbon-cutting for the new life jacket loaner station at Marina Park, VPD Marine Patrol Officer Paul Joyce talks about the importance of wearing life jackets while boating.

XL. These loaner stations are all over the country, and the City is very fortunate to be awarded this grant from hundreds that submit to the foundation, Joyce said.

The life jackets are available at a loaner station at the Venice Avenue boat ramp. They are for anyone who needs to borrow one for a day of fun and relaxing on the water. Once boaters return to the boat ramp, they are asked to return the life jacket so someone else can borrow it. The loaner station will be monitored by the Marine Patrol and Sea Tow Venice.

There was no cost to the City. The sign was donated by Auto Trim Design and the loaner station was donated by Sea Tow Venice. The City put the loaner station in service Friday, July 1 at the beginning of the busy holiday weekend.

The Venice Police Marine Patrol strives every day for boating safety and educating the boating community.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the City of Venice's new life jacket loaner station was held July 8 at the Marina Park Boat Ramp at 301 E. Venice Ave., near the Historic Train Depot.

Venice is the only city in the area to offer a loaner station at any boat ramp in Sarasota County.

"Seventy-six percent of fatal boating accident victims drown, and of those drowning victims with reported life jackets usage, 85 percent were not wearing a life jacket," Venice Police Marine Patrol Officer Paul Joyce said at the brief dedication. "Having life jackets aboard does not save lives — wearing them does."

VPD Marine Patrol was awarded a grant to provide life jackets for boaters who do not have a life jacket or may have the wrong size.

The Sea Tow Foundation awarded the Marine Patrol with several life jackets to fit infants up to adult size



# Fleet manager using GPS to track City vehicles

Soon after Peter Lilholt was hired as the City's fleet manager in the Public Works Department in January 2015, he began looking for ways to improve the City's fleet performance. One of the greatest innovations in tracking fleets is GPS (Global Positioning System).

"I researched the benefits and costs along with checking on the different providers of GPS systems," Lilholt said. "Ultimately I decided to go with Verizon Fleet Services, a part of the larger Verizon Corporation. We had the system installed and were trained late last year and went 'live' around Jan. 1, 2016."

Lilholt says he is extremely pleased with the benefits of the system, which include: real-time vehicle reporting, giving location, speed and performance; diagnostics of vehicle systems; fuel usage, including miles per gallon; percent of idling time; and service alerts.



"I had a City resident call in one day and claim that a garbage truck did not pick up at their house, and I was able to confirm that actually, the truck did, using this system," Lilholt said. "I also had another City resident call and complain that a truck was speeding. I was able to check the GPS system and check to see how fast the truck was actually going in that particular time."

"Another call was from a City resident concerned about excessive idling. The GPS can check how long the idling amount and what the percentage is on that vehicle or vehicles as well."

A couple other scenarios: A driver radios in, "Losing power." GPS diagnosed and confirmed that the truck's fuel injector was not working long before the truck even arrived at the shop, Lilholt says. Another driver radios in that he has a flat tire in the front. The GPS will provide the location for Public Works to get assistance for him immediately.

"A few supervisors were suspecting that their employees were taking too long to pick up garbage cans at parks or for lunch/meal breaks. I was able to track their movement every two minutes and let them know their whereabouts for those days. Also, employees know you are monitoring their movements, and that reduces unauthorized trips and stops."

GPS also significantly helps reduce fuel usage. The system identifies vehicles that are left idling for long periods of time. Should one of the city's 321 vehicles be stolen, staff can pinpoint its exact location. GPS alerts the shop staff when service is due on every vehicle that has GPS installed in it. That helps Lilholt and the shop manager ahead of time to get things in order for that scheduled maintenance.

The Verizon system comes complete with free roadside maintenance, towing, etc. Additionally, engine diagnostic trouble codes and maintenance alerts help reduce the risk of roadside breakdowns.

**GOOD NEWS:** Typically, the City of Venice sees 8-12 vehicle-related incidents reported every quarter. On July 20, the City Safety Committee was delighted to note that the number of such incidents reported during the prior three months was only two; the lowest on record. In April, the Police Department delivered driver training to about 80 city employees, with a focus on areas such as backing, where typically most accidents are seen. "We would like to think that this training directly resulted in the reduction in the number of accidents," said Administrative Services Director Alan Bullock. "In the meantime, we encourage drivers of city vehicles to remain vigilant on the roads."

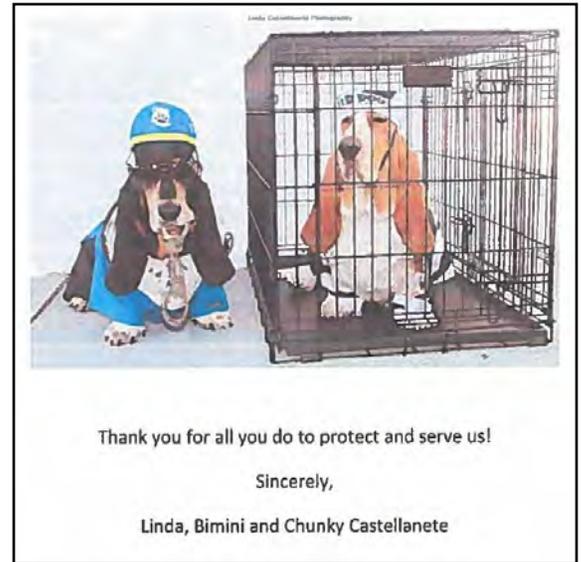
### SUPPORTING OUR OFFICERS



A sampling of the supportive photos, emails and cards (along with a cake, top left, from Dave and Catherine Hollenbeck) that have come to the Venice Police Department in the wake of the July 7 shooting in Dallas, where five officers were slain. The VPD and Chief Tom Mattmuller also wish to thank residents and visitors for all the cookies and other food, well wishes and hugs along the way.

*Even though others depend on you,  
 your own heart is hurting as well.  
 And that makes it even harder.  
 That's why I'm wishing you rest,  
 a break from the stress,  
 and time just to be.  
 You deserve that.  
 You really do.  
 Bruce, Kenzie & Jene*

**Thank You for all you do! ❤️  
 The Schapley family**



## MEET YOUR CO-WORKER

### Chase Banyas: A 'lifer' at 27

Chase Banyas has been working for the city's Public Works Department since he was fresh out of high school.

Banyas is a 2007 graduate of Lemon Bay High School in Englewood and a Sarasota County native. He started working here when he was just 18.

A Solid Waste heavy equipment operator and welder, Banyas, now 27, can do just about every job in the department after nearly a decade. When he started out, a good majority of the PW crew was coming up for retirement. He had trained and worked for a short while with Nat Burns, the late longtime city employee whose name is now on the Public Works building at 221 Seaboard Ave.

Banyas said that at the time, he didn't think about having such solid employment as a teenager. "Now, it's amazing," he said.

He started his day at either 5 or 7 a.m. "It wasn't bad — I was home by 2 p.m.," he said. "Having the whole second half of the day open to do stuff was fun."

Even now, Banyas, an avid boater and angler, says he loves the hours.

A strong work ethic runs in his family. His mother owns her own property management business. Both his grandmother and his aunt retired from government work with the City of Lakeland — his aunt, in Public Works as well. His uncle is also retired from the Lakeland Police Department, and his sister is a Sarasota County teacher.

"So I was able to see everything they were able to accomplish," Banyas said, adding when he got the Venice gig, his mom was "thrilled."

A lot of people have misconceptions about Solid Waste workers — "no one ever says they want to grow up and be a garbage man," Banyas points out — "but there's some residents who come out and talk to us. They know us all by name. It means a lot.

Banyas recently earned a city BUS token for helping out a parks employee who had locked his keys and cellphone in his city vehicle on a Saturday, when there's a skeleton crew.

"We ended up getting into it," Banyas said. "We had to run around for a while to find (another) key."

When he's not working, Banyas enjoys spending time with his wife Chrissy, a hair stylist, and their kids. Banyas adopted his wife's two children, daughter Chyna, 16, and son Jake, 9; the couple also have a 2-year-old daughter, Elayna. Banyas also loves to go out on his boat, an 18-foot Aquasport.

"That's where I'm at every Sunday," he said.

Jake is in his fourth year of Pop Warner football; his youngest daughter loves being outside. "She'd rather be on the playground any day than watch TV," he said. And, in staying with the family work ethic, Chyna already has a job at a local restaurant.

As for his employment with the city, "I'm not going anywhere," Banyas said. "I'm a lifer."



Solid Waste heavy equipment operator and welder Chase Banyas has been working for the city since he was a teenager.

### AROUND TOWN



Assistant City Manager Len Bramble celebrates his 60th birthday in style on July 25.



Venice Police Officer David Creasy and Marine Patrol Officer Paul Joyce assisted with the SunCoast Reef Rovers Diving Club underwater cleanup July 23 at the North Jetty. With 30 divers and 15 topside helpers volunteering, about 800 pounds of trash were collected from around the Jetty rocks, according to organizers.



At left, Public Works employees clear thick brush and undergrowth from the southeast corner of the Lord-Higel House property near City Hall. At right, Airport Operations and Maintenance Supervisor James Eppley operates a bucket truck.



### AROUND TOWN



At left, Venice Police Sgt. Ron Perisho led a VPD Bike Unit safety demo recently at Legacy Park for Boy Scout Troop 77. At right, Venice firefighters Phil Castellano and Eric Putnal with the Fire Rescue ladder truck at the "Christmas in July" event downtown.



Director of Administrative Services Alan Bullock spends a day a month in the field working alongside employees from various departments. On July 22, Bullock cleaned gravity sewer lines between manhole covers with Phil Carnell, Utilities Water Reclamation field operations specialist (pictured) and Noill Leiva, field operations technician.



VPD Capt. Mike Rose participated in a thank-you banner presentation July 21 to Sarasota County law enforcement from 92.1 CTO.

### AROUND TOWN



Work sessions on "Old Betsy," the city's historic 1926 firetruck, were held in early July with assistance from Earl Midlam. Gaylord George worked on the vehicle's brass on July 7, and Dorothy Korwek, former Venice City Council member and former Historical Resources director, and Michelle Harm, Venice Museum & Archives curator and collections manager, made a new design for banners to go on the truck for Old Betsy's goth birthday. On July 9, Dennis Taylor, Mike Gelormino, Gary Youngberg, Justin Lewis and Venice City Council Member Fred Fraize helped out.



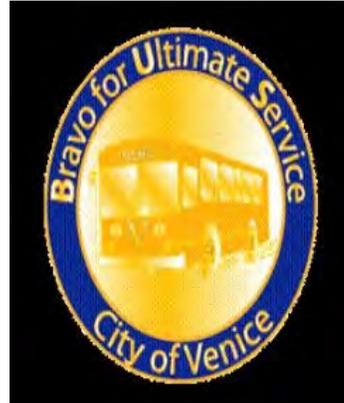
Mako, a German shepherd, injured the bottom of his right paw during K-9 training July 7. VPD Canine Handler Kristen Kimson loaded her partner in their K-9 vehicle, and went to the veterinarian's office. Mako received several stitches and is currently in good health.

On July 14, Venice Police Marine Patrol, Public Works/Solid Waste, Venice Sea Tow and Sarasota Natural Resources worked together to remove a derelict vessel from Venice waters. The sailboat, at right, was anchored at the Higel anchorage field. The owner became unable to care for it due to personal issues. After Tropical Storm Colin, the vessel's mast broke and fell into the water. The owner agreed to sign the boat over to the City so it could be disposed of before it became a serious navigational or environmental hazard. Public Works secured the vessel and the mast and assisted Sea Tow with removing the anchors so the boat could get towed to the ramp. Solid Waste then hauled it away to the landfill.



## BUS token recipients

Bravo for Ultimate Service is an employee incentive program based on the PRIDE (Productive, Responsible, Innovative, Dedicated, Ethical) initiative adopted by City Council. It rewards employees for going above and beyond. Once an employee collects five BUS tokens, he or she can turn them in to Administrative Services for \$50.



### BUS tokens were recently awarded to:

Gillian Carney, Engineering

Italia Adams, Administrative Services

Michelle Girvan, City Clerk's Office

Officer Rodrigo Morales, VPD

Karen Butterworth, Development Services/Building

Frank O'Neill, Development Services/Building

Jimmy Bennett, Utilities/Field Operations

Vadim Bugayev, Utilities/Field Operations

Marty Dietz, Utilities/Field Operations

Scott Lott, Public Works/Parks

Cary Patterson, Public Works/Maintenance

Robert Bondurant, Public Works/Maintenance

Lavell Cudjo, Utilities

Chase Banyas, Public Works/Solid Waste

Scott Pickett, Planning

Jeanette Bartek, Administrative Services

## Anniversaries

Congrats to James Runck with Fire Rescue, who marks 15 years with the city on Aug. 2.

## Welcome to the Team

**The following employees recently started working for the city:**

Christopher Bruns, Public Works/Parks Maintenance, July 1

Darlene Culpepper, Engineering, Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator, July 6

Mark Cervasio, Airport Director, July 18

## AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

DAY	EMPLOYEE	DEPARTMENT
2	Daniel Sremba	Fire
3	John Monville	Engineering
5	Louis Conda	Public Works/Solid Waste
7	Todd Lucas	Police
8	Kelli Peyton	Police
9	Cary Patterson	Public Works
9	Joseph Johnson	Fire
9	Davis Creasy	Police
11	James Clinch	Engineering
13	Bob Moroni	Public Works/Solid Waste
13	Salvatore Denoto	Utilities/Dist/Collection
16	Kyle Hartley	Fire
17	Anthony Ramirez	Utilities/Dist/Collection
19	Anthony Wierzbicki	Utilities
20	Kathy Millsbaugh	Finance
21	Kelly Treat	Utilities
22	J. Vincent Navickas	Utilities/Wastewater
22	David Guilmette	Utilities/Dist/Collection



DAY	EMPLOYEE	DEPARTMENT
23	Michael O'Connor	Fire
25	Philip Castellano	Fire
26	Joanne Benjamin	Finance
26	Jeffrey Hackett	Engineering
27	Michael Reeves	Building
28	Darlene Culpepper	Engineering
29	Tammy Short	Fire
29	Brandon Folkers	Fire
31	Michael Carello	Public Works/Recycling

# TAKE A BOW

## Administrative Services

“One of the city’s vehicles recently needed significant engine repairs after a fuel mix-up,” Administrative Services Director Alan Bullock reported “It was not immediately apparent that this could be covered by insurance, but **Jeanette Bartek** suggested that we file a claim, and it was covered. As a result, the city received \$10,156 from its insurance carrier. Bravo!”

## Info Desk/Cashier’s Office/City Clerk’s Office

Skip Mascheri wrote City Manager Ed Lavalley: “Sir, you have developed a situation of appreciation from a new resident! Recently I visited City Hall to fill out an application for Utilities (water, etc.) service (Friday, 7/1). The receptionist was so very helpful and friendly. Then I went to the cashier area. The individuals in that department were equally helpful and friendly. I know I found a place that I can truly call home!”

“On June 28, a distressed local resident reported numerous kittens marauding around the outside of her house,” Alan Bullock reported. “She wasn’t sure what to do, so she had called the city for guidance. **Italia Adams** took the call. She and **Michelle Girvan** hatched a plan: They waited until the end of the work day and then formed an impromptu special forces unit of sorts, deployed to the reported location and boxed up five kittens for the St. Francis Animal Shelter. The resident is very happy with the outcome.”

## Police

A resident sent Officer **John Majka** a card stating “Can’t thank you enough for being so nice.” Inside, she wrote: “I wanted to let you know how grateful I am for the way you handled the situation at my home with the sudden death of my husband on May 1. You were very polite, professional and kind. It was very stress-relieving, to say the least. Best of luck to you, and again, thanks.”

“I’d like to bring to your attention the exceptional behavior of Officer **Adam Daneman**,” resident Hanni Koenig wrote. “I had a traffic accident on June 19, and the officer was very courteous, polite, attentive and concerned about my safety.”

Officer **Rodrigo Morales** recently created an up-to-date database containing useful information relating to local homeless persons. He also called the Salvation Army and provided all of the names to verify none of the individuals has been banned from using their services.

Mayor John Holic wrote the city manager on July 10: “Please pass on my compliments to VPD for a job well done in handling a potentially difficult and emotional charged demonstration at four churches within Venice City Limits this morning. Officers from VPD did an exemplary job of diffusing any conflicts before they became headline material and built excellent rapport with many citizens of our city. Great job by all participants and a sincere thank you on behalf of the City.”

*Continued on page 12*

# TAKE A BOW

*Continued from page 11*

## Public Works

After Public Works staff removed a hanging plant from obstructing a stop sign at Tampa Ave. W. and Nokomis Ave. N. downtown — the same day it was reported by resident Charlie Miller — he wrote in: “Everyone, thanks for the fast response to this matter.”

Resident Ray Quigley wrote **Susan Carpenter** and **Skip Pettit**: “Thank you and your crew very much for taking care of my concern with the tree in front of my house on Sleepy Hollow Ct. in Pinebrook South. It was a excellent job and cleanup.”

Solid Waste employee **Chase Banyas** assisted another Public Works department (Parks) employee who was locked out of his city vehicle while working a weekend assignment in mid-July.

## Utilities

Wrote Kelly Treat on June 22, “I just spoke to Sharon Gilman on the 500 block of Riviera St. and she wanted me to inform **Cassandra Day**’s supervisor that she was very pleased with the quality of customer service she received from her. She stated Cassandra went above and beyond to resolve her issues with disconnecting the potable irrigation meter and connecting to the reclaimed water service, as part of the Potable Irrigation Customers within 100 feet of Reclaimed Project. She went on to say that Cassandra was so pleasant and calm on the phone and ensured her that she would get her to the correct person to resolve her issues.”

**Brian Treat** and **Eric Barr** recently attended the Southeast Desalting Association's 2016 Spring Symposium. Titled "The Sun Never Sets on Membranes," this symposium included regulation updates, the latest in design, planning, and cost, membrane technology applications, case studies/lessons learned and operations/maintenance, as well as small group hands-on sessions, a networking event and a membrane plant facility tour. Brian and Eric received a certificate of attendance and earned 1.5 continuing education credits each.

**Tell family and friends to Like us on Facebook:  
Venice, Florida Municipal Government**

## MILESTONES



Utilities Administrative Coordinator Dorothy Tary married Richard Ferrell on July 2, 2016, at Pelican Pointe Golf & Country Club in Venice.

Here's wishing the happy couple many years of wedded bliss!

---

### It's a girl!

Congratulations to Tyler and Tiffany Eaton on the addition of daughter Tessa Marie Eaton, who was born Monday, Aug. 1, 2016, at 9:05 a.m., weighing 8 pounds, 1 ounce, and measuring 20 ½ inches long. Tyler is a six-year firemedic with Fire Rescue. Both Tiff and the baby are doing fine!



## PASSINGS

### **Hans D. Behrens**

*Jan. 15, 1935-July 4, 2016*

Hans, 81, was the Building official for the City of Venice and retired in 2010. He worked for the city for 15 years.

He moved to this area over 30 years ago.

Hans also served as a Building director for Charlotte and Lee counties.

He was an honorary member for life of the Building Officials Association of FL (BOAF) and other building contractors organizations throughout his career. He grew up in Bremerhaven, Germany, and came over to New York at age 23.

Hans is survived by his wife, Karleen of Punta Gorda, Fla.; two sisters, Anita Grosspietsch and Helke Bucken of Germany; son, Robert Destefano and daughter, Jennifer Williams of North Port, Fla., grandchildren, Jaylyn, Bradyn, Bryce and Jasmine; sister-in-law, Annette Levy; brother-in-law, Lloyd Levy; and nephew, Josh Levy.

### **Elizabeth "Betty" Eckert**

*June 4, 1942-July 19, 2016*

Betty worked for the City of Venice for about 17 years. She worked at the Police Department as a records clerk and as a parking enforcement officer before that. Her daughter, Betty Camp, just retired last year from VPD as a police officer.

Betty, 74, was a Venice resident for 30-plus years, formerly of Elizabeth, New Jersey.

She is survived by her daughter, Betty "Ed" Camp of Sarasota, Fla.; son, Stephen Eckert of Iselin, N.J., sisters, Joan Westerfield of Union Beach, N.J., and Irene Pinkevicz of Cranford, N.J.; brothers, Richard Szotak of Kentucky, Joseph Szotak of Enfield, Conn., and Matthew Szotak of Monmouth County, N.J.; one granddaughter, Nicole Eckert of Clark, N.J.; and many other extended family members.

A celebration of life service was held Saturday, July 23, at Toale Brothers Funeral Homes, Ewing Chapel, in Venice.

Memorial donations may be made to Special Olympics, Attn.: Web Gifts, 1133 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-3604.



# City of Venice Health & Wellness Fair

Please join us as an exhibitor and promote your business at the Venice Community Center on

**Wednesday, August 31, 2016 Noon - 5:00 PM**

**&**

**Thursday, September 1, 2016 7:00 AM - 11:30 AM**

## OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

### About the Event

The public health and wellness fair will be held in conjunction with the annual health screening for City employees, with attendance estimated at 200+.

### Participation

There is no fee for participation in the event. We do request that at least one prize be donated for the employee raffle. You are encouraged to hold additional raffles at your booth to increase networking opportunities.

### Setup/Breakdown Hours

Setup: August 31 - 7:00 AM - Noon  
September 1 - 6:00 AM - 7:00 AM  
Breakdown: August 31 - 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
September 1 - 11:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Sorry, no early breakdown is allowed.

### Exhibit Spaces

The event will take place in rooms A, B and C of the auditorium in the Venice Community Center. Exhibitor tables are 8'x2.5' and include chairs. Each exhibitor will provide his/her own table covering. A limited number of electrical power drops are available. Booth assignments will be made by the Wellness Team, making every effort to accommodate any special re-quests, with preference given to exhibitors participating on both event days.

### Registration

For more information, please contact Susanne Daniels via email at [sdaniels@venicegov.com](mailto:sdaniels@venicegov.com) or phone at 941-882-7372. Registration is due no later than August 5<sup>th</sup>.

## City seeking Gold Bicycle Friendly status

Four years ago this month, dedicated city volunteers submitted a Bicycle Friendly Community application to the League of American Bicyclists, which honored Venice with its Silver designation. On July 27, a BFC application was again submitted to the League, and this time the city is motivated for the Gold.

This is the third time completing the application, and with each interval it seems to be revised with more extensive questions. The city's first attempt was submitted in 2008, when Venice received an Honorable Mention. The second was submitted in 2012, when the city bypassed Bronze status and went straight to the Silver designation.

The Bike/Walk Venice volunteer team worked diligently along with City Engineer Kathleen Weeden and other city members to

complete the 100-plus-question form.

Without their assistance in providing essential technical data, the application could not have been completed.

The application covered five principal sections — education, encouragement, enforcement, evaluation and planning, and the biggest measure, engineering. This time, it seems the League is really focusing on engineering and what the city is doing to keep cyclists safe.

Venice has come a long way toward being bicycle-friendly and has made a lot of improvements since the last application submission, including installing new bike racks around the city, restriping bike lanes and crosswalks, resurfacing roads, and hiring a part-time bicycle pedestrian coordinator, Darlene Culpepper.

The city will be notified of the League's decision in six to eight weeks.



Darlene Culpepper, Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator; Russ Johnson, Bike/Walk Venice; and Kathleen Weeden, City Engineer; prepare July 27 to submit the Bicycle Friendly Community application for the City of Venice.