



# VENICE CITY SCENE

June 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.

## Water poster contest winners lauded



Epiphany Cathedral fifth-grade finalists Natalia Nichols, Sophia Neider and Skye vanGennip with winner Navaeh Perez Bazan, who was given a T-shirt May 2 with her winning design on it. The girls are pictured with Assistant City Manager Len Bramble, City Council Member Bob Daniels, Mayor John Holic, Utilities Administrative Coordinator Dorothy Tary and Water Plant Lead Operator Paul Dagley.

Water is one of the most important resources on earth – all living things need water.

The City of Venice’s annual Water Conservation Poster Contest, hosted by the Utilities Department, aims to drive this point home through the eyes of another important resource – our children.

“It’s important that we pass this message on to the next generation so they can continue to learn the best way to protect our water supply,” said Utilities Administrative Coordinator Dorothy Tary, who organizes the contest each year for local school children. “The poster contest gives the students an opportunity to tell others what water conservation means to them and any water savings tips they would like to share.

Utilities received 132 posters this year for the contest, and finalists and winners were recognized at their schools, Epiphany Cathedral and Venice Elementary, by city officials. The top artists also received T-shirts with their winning designs printed on them and were lauded during the May 10 City Council meeting.

The winning posters were displayed at City Hall through May 25.

At Epiphany, fourth-grade finalists were Allison Hornberger, Abigail Staas and Gwen Hazel, with winner Kaitlyn Giglio. Fifth-grade finalists at the school were Natalia Nichols, Sophia Neider and Skye vanGennip, with winner Nevaeh Perez Bazan. Nevaeh’s poster was additionally chosen to represent the city in

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Epiphany fourth-grade finalists Abigail Staas and Gwen Hazel, with winner Kaitlyn Giglio, are pictured with council members and city staff. Not pictured: Finalist Allison Hornberger.

### **Poster contest winners, continued from page 1**

the American Water Works Association Statewide Drop Savers Water Conservation Poster Contest. The fifth-grader will receive a letter and a box of miscellaneous items from AWWA thanking her for participating in the statewide competition.

Venice Elementary fifth-grade finalists were Grace Peckat, Kaitlyn Haley, Gwendolyn Benson, Iris Devries and Jessica Oakley, with winner Kristin Clark.

The city has sponsored the contest for at least 16 years; Tary has been coordinating it for the last dozen.

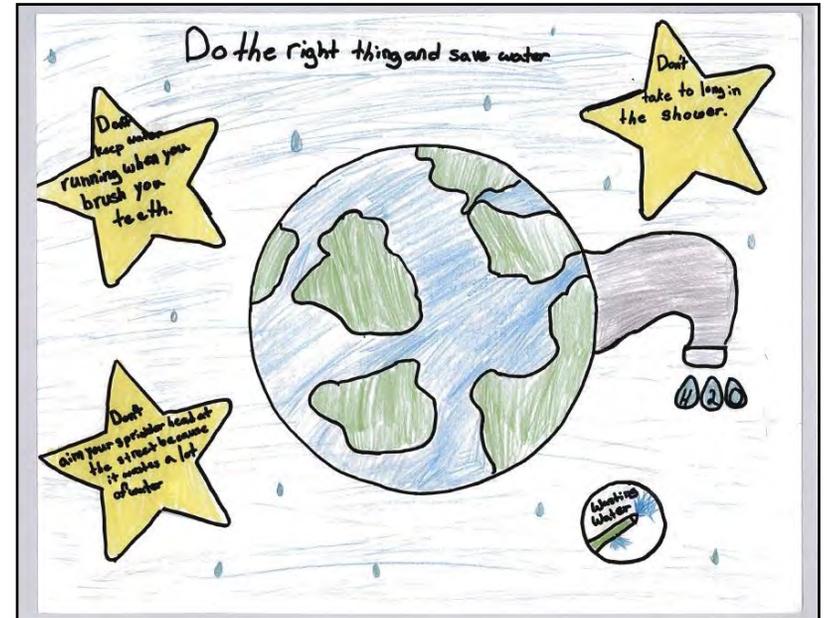


Epiphany Cathedral fifth-grader Nevaeh Perez Bazan, had her Utilities Water Conservation Poster Contest design chosen to represent the City of Venice in the American Water Works Association Statewide Drop Savers Water Conservation Poster Contest. This is Nevaeh's winning artwork.

*More photos and artwork on page 3*



Venice Elementary fifth-grade poster contest finalists Grace Peckat, Kaitlyn Haley, Gwendolyn Bensen, Iris Devries and Jessica Oakley with winner Kristin Clark, who was given a T-shirt May 5 with her winning design on it. The girls are pictured with Water Plant Operator Eric Barr, City Council Member Jeanette Gates, Water Plant Operator Paul Knowles and Utilities Administrative Coordinator Dorothy Tary.



At top right, detail of Epiphany fourth-grader Kaitlyn Giglio's winning artwork. Venice Elementary fifth-grader Kristin Clark's winning poster design is at bottom right.

## Blanchard, Daneman receive Moose Valor Awards



Fire District Battalion Chief Scott Blanchard and Police Officer Adam Daneman received the Moose Valor Award on May 15.

the driver, Daneman conducted a roadside investigation and received consent from the driver to search his person as well as the vehicle. During the search, a baggie of cocaine and prescription pills that were not prescribed to the driver were discovered. Marijuana, a scale and a loaded .44 Magnum handgun inside a backpack were also discovered. The trunk of the vehicle contained a large plastic container with a kit used to manufacture THC oil. There were approximately 14 grams of finished THC oil product. Two large knives, a rifle and a shotgun were also found.

Two Venice first responders, Fire District Battalion Chief Scott Blanchard and Police Officer Adam Daneman, have received the Moose Valor Award.

The Valor Award is presented in recognition of heroic acts in which a first responder has gone above the call of duty.

In 2015, then Lieutenant Blanchard was part of a response team to an incident involving a person preparing to jump from the ledge of a three-story building, according to fire officials. While another firefighter provided a distraction, Blanchard was able to approach, grab and rescue the individual. His actions put himself at extreme risk due to the location and the unpredictable state of the individual. It should be noted that the rescue was a success.

Blanchard takes pride in striving to be the best, whether on a personal level and as a member of the fire department, fire officials say. His dedication and leadership has been evident throughout his 15 years of service. He joined the department in 2001 and was awarded the Venice Firefighter of the Year 2003 and the city's Employee of the Quarter for the fourth quarter 2003. He was promoted to lieutenant in 2007 and to battalion chief in January 2016.

Blanchard also received the Officer of the Year Award, a recognition for a member whose attitude, character, outstanding service and dedication to fire service is in keeping with the highest traditions of the Venice Fire Rescue. This award is only given to lieutenants and battalion chiefs. Blanchard's nomination shares how he leads by example: He has taken on extra responsibility of the department's radio equipment for the last 10 years, and he regularly excels in leading training of his personnel beyond the normal department-wide training programs.

Married to his wife Barbara for 25 years, they have four children.

### Officer intercepts drug dealer

In late August 2015, Officer Adam Daneman conducted a traffic stop in the 1300 block of East Venice Avenue for a speeding violation. Upon contact with

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***Valor Awards, continued from page 4***

Because of Daneman's traffic stop and investigation, the driver was arrested on the following charges: manufacturing a controlled substance, possession of cocaine, possession of cannabis with intent to deliver and possession of a controlled substance without a prescription.

Most importantly, several weapons were seized before an innocent person or people may have been the victim of a violent crime, police officials said.

Daneman has been with the city since November 2014.



At top, VPD Officer Adam Daneman is presented with the Moose Valor Award on May 15 as Police Chief Tom Mattmuller looks on. At right, Venice Fire District Battalion Chief Scott Blanchard is given his award as Fire Chief Shawn Carvey looks on.



## Pierce named new Finance director

The City of Venice has hired Walter H. Pierce III of Tampa as its new Finance director. Following council approval on Tuesday, May 24, Pierce started with the city Thursday, May 26.

Pierce brings to the city over 30 years' experience in all areas of governmental business services that include accounting, finance, treasury and budgeting, serving in CFO and director positions for 20 of those years.



**PIERCE**

His most current position was as director of finance and personnel for the Town of Indian Shores, Fla., where he oversaw all budgetary, finance, payroll, treasury and personnel functions for the town, and constructed a \$3.9 million budget for fiscal year 2015-2016. He was also directly responsible for monitoring the town police pension fund and annual report to the state. He held that post from August 2014 to present.

Prior to Indian Shores, he was the chief financial officer for the Hillsborough County Property Appraiser's Office in Tampa, a position he held from May 2003 to July 2014. In addition to overseeing all the financial, treasury, budget and payroll functions of the appraiser's office, Pierce was also responsible for overseeing and completing an upgrade of payroll and human resources software that assisted in streamlining functions and providing benefits to the disaster recovery plan there. He also assisted in reviewing a tax roll that exceeded \$85 billion in taxable values for Hillsborough County.

Pierce also worked for the Duval County School Board in Jacksonville and the Orange County School Board in Orlando in the 1990s, and the Sarasota County School Board from 1981-1995 in accounting and finance roles. He was the budget/financial manager with the Sarasota school district from 1987-1995.

"I've worked 30 years in governmental organizations – schools, county and municipal – so I feel like I've seen all aspects of government and the public sector," Pierce said. He said that municipal government, especially, has always intrigued him.

"I became really hands-on at Indian Shores. I did payroll. I wanted to know all aspects of (budget and finance) – that's the only way to do it."

After working in different locales in Florida, he called Venice "the best place to be."

"I started off in Sarasota County ... and I always found myself coming to Venice," said Pierce, who had worked with Taylor Ranch, Venice Middle and Venice High schools to assist in account management. "So I have a connection professionally."

"I really see this coming full circle in my career – coming back home, so to speak."

Pierce replaces former Venice finance director Jeff Snyder, who left the city last year. The department has been overseen by Interim Finance Director Linda Senne.

According to Alan Bullock, director of Administrative Services, "Walt really impressed the appointed selection panel and the city manager. At the conclusion of the selection process, we understand him to be personable, diligent, detail-oriented, analytical, ethical, loyal, humble and discrete, with good communication skills and a collaborative approach to problem-solving.

"In short, all very positive leadership traits for the key position of Finance director."

"We're really looking forward to what Walter will add to our organization," added Assistant City Manager Len Bramble.

Pierce, whose parents live in Sarasota, has a daughter who lives in New York and a stepson who also lives in Sarasota. He plans to reside within Venice city limits.

## MEET YOUR CO-WORKER

### Travis Hardwick: Nocturnal lifestyle



A rare sighting of Wastewater Plant Operator Travis Hardwick during the day at the Eastside Water Reclamation Facility.

Seventeen-year city Utilities employee Travis Hardwick is the first to admit it: He's a creature of the night.

"I've lived and worked a nocturnal lifestyle since I was 17," he said. "Everyone loves me because I work nights."

Hardwick's solitary, 10-hour shifts at Eastside Water Reclamation Facility off Laurel Road begin at 9:30 p.m.

"In the beginning, it's an overwhelming feeling – you're in charge of this multi-million-dollar facility and you better know what you're doing," he said. "But the cavalry is a phone call away."

Hardwick, 62, and his partner at the plant – they each work three nights a week separately, and one together – tote "man down" radios, the same carried by firefighters who go into burning buildings. The equipment monitors movement, and goes off if none is detected after 45 seconds, patching into the 911 system.

"If my body goes horizontal, (the radio) will call (911) immediately," he added.

Another safety bonus is that Venice police are in and out of the gate constantly, as a refueling station is just down the road.

During his shift, Hardwick's a shark – constantly moving, going up and down stairs, monitoring the plant that's rated for 6 million gallons a day.

"You have to make sure of your footing, know where you're stepping," he said. "Lightning is the biggest menace. When you're on top, you're one of the highest things up there."

You have to be aware, he emphasized, because you are alone.

"You get accustomed to sights and sounds, you detect the differences – especially sounds," he said. "If a pump malfunctions, you detect it."

Computers run just about everything at the plant, but they're not flawless.

"I'm here to do things manually because computers crash. I don't worry about being replaced," he laughed.

In addition to the wildlife that emerges at night, Hardwick has enjoyed space shuttle launches, meteor showers and unique phases of the moon from his perch.

"You see things that most people don't see," he said.

As a kid growing up in Louisville, Ky., Hardwick was "glued to the radio, like any teenager." He decided that when he got out of school, he wanted to be a DJ.

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**Co-worker, continued from page 7**

He got his foot in the door by befriending a radio DJ in his home town. He started out running the station's public affairs and church programming on Sundays, along with the black community report. He went on to DJ for a station in Elizabethtown, Ky., and spent 10 years with an NPR affiliate in Louisville. "I did all the shifts because I wanted to try them all, but I gravitated toward nights," Hardwick said, ticking off all the reasons why – fewer commercials, fewer people in and out, he could have his friends in the control room, he could play what he wanted to.

When Hardwick came to Sarasota in 1989, he wanted to get out of commercial radio, saying the market was "fragmenting."

Not sure what he wanted to do, he first became a police dispatcher for the City of Sarasota.

"That proved to be very stressful," he said. "I only lasted three months."

He kept noticing on the employee bulletin boards openings at the water and wastewater plants in Sarasota. Staff convinced him to take a tour of the wastewater side.

"It was interesting, challenging," he said. "The pay was more. It wasn't what I expected."

So, in his 40s, he started apprenticing. There was such a shortage of workers at the plant, he wound up working 11 p.m. to 7 a.m., seven nights a week, for a solid year. He saw his family nights, before his shift.

After two years with the City of Sarasota, he went to work for a private utility, Southern States Utilities in Venice Gardens, which no longer exists.

"It was easy to get in once I went for the nights," he laughed.

When Sarasota County took over the utility in December 1994, Hardwick stayed on. He came to the City of Venice in 1999.

"It was time to stop jumping around and get my time in," said Hardwick, who lives 12 minutes from the Eastside plant.

As for his personal life, Hardwick said he has an "unconventional" marriage. His wife of five years, Bonnie, lives in Louisville, working on her retirement with UPS. She's been with the company for nearly 30 years.

The two had dated in the '80s and reconnected on Facebook.

"We make a lot trips" back and forth, Hardwick said, and enjoy their time together. Allegiant Air out of Punta Gorda flies straight through to Lexington, Ky., with fares sometimes as low as \$51 a ticket. Bonnie likes to come here though, "because it's Florida."

Hardwick has three children from previous relationships, Kissiah (pronounced Kiss-sigh-uh), who will turn 34 on July 4 and also works for UPS in Louisville; Quentin, 32, of Tallahassee, who works for an airline; and Aaron, 24, a Venice resident who does maintenance at the Ramada Hotel.

Hardwick says his job is largely misunderstood. When people think of wastewater, he said, they think of raw sewage.

"What you see here (at the plant) is a blend of micro-organisms with the water. We've copied what occurs in the natural world, concentrated it" he said. "It's really one of our greatest achievements – we're taking the dirtiest water imaginable, and making it crystal-clear before it goes out of here. It gets a bad rap."

Of his job, Hardwick maintains, "This is my last gig. I'm going to retire here."

And when the wastewater plant operator is not working or seeing his wife?

"I sleep," he laughed.



As evening fell over the Eastside plant recently, Hardwick captured this image of two ducks on top of the water clarification tank.

### GOOD EATS



The Wellness Team put on its Annual Healthy Lunch for city employees May 5 in Community Hall. Pictured at left are Tony Grissanti, retired from Fire Rescue; Cynthia Dehler, fire inspector; Marta Ugas-Carpenter, Airport administrative coordinator; James Clinch, assistant city engineer; Susan Carpenter, Public Works administrative coordinator; Nancy Hurley, IT manager; and Dorothy Tary, Utilities administrative coordinator.



This year's lunch was a Greek-inspired chicken gyro with feta cheese, onions and cucumber dressing, salad, and a fruit and granola parfait for dessert.



## 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:

- Brittany Spinosi, Police
- Steven Short, Police
- Zane Keister, Police
- Officer Louis White, Police
- James Clinch, Engineering (2)
- John Monville, Engineering
- Scott Marra, Public Works
- Aaron Isley, Utilities
- John Clark, Utilities
- Carolyn Hart, Finance

- Nancy Carello, Finance
- Jessica Samson, Finance (2)
- Cynthia Dehler, Fire
- Dave Abene, Finance
- Heather Taylor, Clerk's Office
- Marta Ugas-Carpenter, Airport
- Nancy Hurley, IT
- Dorothy Tary, Utilities
- Susan Carpenter, Public Works

## Anniversaries

The following employees celebrate one of the 5-year milestones of employment with the city:

### 25 YEARS

Paul Joyce, Police, June 3

### 20 YEARS

Joseph Johnson, Fire, May 1

### 15 YEARS

Babs Anderson, Fire, May 7

Kathy Millspaugh, Finance, June 13

Pat Goree, City Clerk's Office, June 18

Ron Perisho, Police, June 18

### 10 YEARS

Heather LeDuc, Airport, May 18

Edward Wix, Public Works/Recycling, May 26

### 5 YEARS

Michael Cararo, Public Works/Solid Waste, June 25

## Welcome to the Team

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

Ronald Bednar, Public Works/Parks Maintenance, May 2

Craig Gouthro, Public Works/Solid Waste, May 2

Seth Kenny, Police, May 2

William Kuchar, Police, May 2

Wesley Weber, Police, May 2

John White, Airport, May 10

Michelle Newman, Finance, May 11

Walt Pierce, Finance, May 26

# JUNE

DAY	EMPLOYEE	DEPARTMENT
2	Shawn Carvey	Fire
3	Thomas Davis	Public Works/Recycling
3	Ruth Terry	Police
3	Phillip Carnell	Utilities/Dist/Collection
3	Timothy Rounds	Public Works/Parks Maintenance
6	Chad Meyers	Fire
7	Anna Terpstra	Airport
12	Joseph Silva	Fire
15	James Runck	Fire
15	Susanne Daniels	Finance
19	Richard Lanigan	Fire
20	John Clark	Utilities
20	Jeff Bolen	IT
22	Oscar Guinart	Police
23	Ron Perisho	Police
24	Joseph Parsons	Fire
25	Fred Fraize	City Council
25	Seth Kenny	Police
28	Robin Williams	Finance



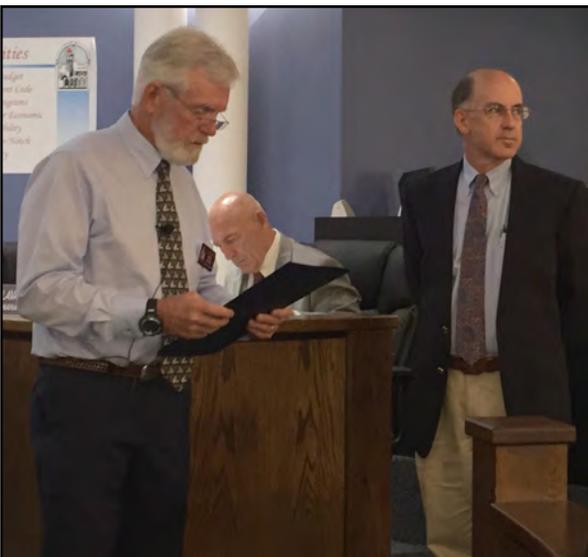
### IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS



Interim Finance Director Linda Senne reacts to the weight of the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the Fiscal Year Ending 2016 Budget from the Government Finance Officers Association, presented to her by Mayor John Holic on May 24. *Photo by Earle Kimel/Herald-Tribune*



Above and below, the city sponsored a parliamentary procedure class on May 13, led by Shirley Brodbeck and Beth Bond of the National Association of Parliamentarians. City Council members, board members and staff attended the training.



At left, Council Member Fred Fraize reads a proclamation recognizing May 15-21, 2016, as Water Reuse Week, presented to Utilities Director Tim Hochuli on May 10.



## TAKE A BOW

On May 3, a large flower arrangement was sent to the City Manager's Office as a thank you to **Ed Lavallee, Len Bramble, Judy Gamel**, the Public Works Department, Police Department (especially Sgt. **Ron Perisho**) and Fire Rescue for collectively helping to resolve a neighborhood parking issue. It was sent as a thank you from "Myles and Lynn Wegman, Steve Adams and all of the residents of Inlet Circle Drive," according to the accompanying card.

### Engineering

Regarding a drainage project across the street from his property at 400 Bayshore Drive, resident David Gathman wrote in an email: "The new swale certainly seemed to work nicely during (a recent) downpour. I went out and walked west on Bayshore during the downpour and the water did indeed stay on the south side of the roadway. Hopefully this resolves ... our issue for a good, long time. We appreciate the attention and good work." City Engineer Kathleen Weeden gave **James Clinch** and **John Monville** kudos for a job well done.

### Public Works

Council Member Bob Daniels reported May 3 that at a Venice Library input meeting, "several residents came up to me to say how happy they were with the pavers on Miami Avenue, and all the work in the MainStreet business area. Also, six Miami Avenue businesses told me thanks for the paver work."

Susan Carpenter relayed this story in a May 19 email: "Trisha Matero's husband stopped here at the Public Works office to see if Trish wanted to meet him for lunch. Soon after, they both left for lunch in their own cars. About 15 minutes later, we received a frantic call from Trish stating that their dog, Chloe, was missing from the back seat of her husband's truck. Since he had made a couple of stops on the way to our office, he wasn't sure where the dog might have jumped out. I immediately got on the radio and told all Public Works employees we had a missing black lab, possibly in the industrial area, and to keep an eye out for her.

"Right away I heard drivers sounding off on the radio which streets they were on and that they were searching for Chloe. Then, **Chris Basile**, one of the Solid Waste drivers who was searching around the area, noticed a black dog under a truck. Afraid his big truck would scare her, he called his foreman, **Doug Mersek**, and asked him to check it out. Doug had also been searching the streets nearby so he was there in a minute. Sure enough, it was Chloe and she was happy to jump in Doug's truck and into the A/C. I had the pleasure of calling Trish and letting her know her dog was safe and sound. What a great example of a department pulling together for each other and working towards a common goal. Everyone was all smiles at the outcome."

PIO Lorraine Anderson was appreciative of the efforts of **Ricky Simpson** and his team for their terrific job setting up for the city's Annual Hurricane Preparedness Seminar on May 25. "Everything ran smoothly in large part due to them. When another staff member suggested we get a cooler with ice for our bottled water, I called Ricky and he had it down within 10 minutes. Phenomenal teamwork," she wrote in an email. In addition, when participants ran out of chairs in chambers, Ricky's crew responded again within minutes, setting up additional seating from Community Hall.

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### IN TRAINING



City directors and other staff participated in an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) exercise with Sarasota County on May 20 at City Hall, responding to the aftermath of "Hurricane Buck." Venice Fire Administrative Battalion Chief Frank Giddens, in the above photo at right, led communication efforts here.



Venice Fire Rescue held high-rise training May 16 at The Waterfront condos, 147 E. Tampa Ave. A representative from Miami-Dade Fire Rescue was on hand to work with local firefighters.



### IN TRAINING



City staff participated in an NPOD (Neighborhood Point of Distribution) emergency exercise on May 20 at Well-field Park. At left, Sarasota County Support Operations Chief Cesar Rodriguez briefs Venice NPOD members Judy Gamel with the City Manager's Office and Debbie Briggs with Finance. At right, Venice NPOD members Rob Bondurant with Public Works and Marta Ugas-Carpenter with the Airport set up traffic cones as Human Resources Manager Marion Pace looks on.



### IN TRAINING



The city is holding a series of "Sensitivity for Seniors" workshops this year for employees, facilitated by Joan Lowery and Stacy Prouty. In the May 10 session, participants donned special goggles to see the effects of cataracts and gloves to mimic having arthritis, among other exercises. The facilitators also role-played with staff. Upcoming workshops will be held Aug. 4 and Sept. 14.



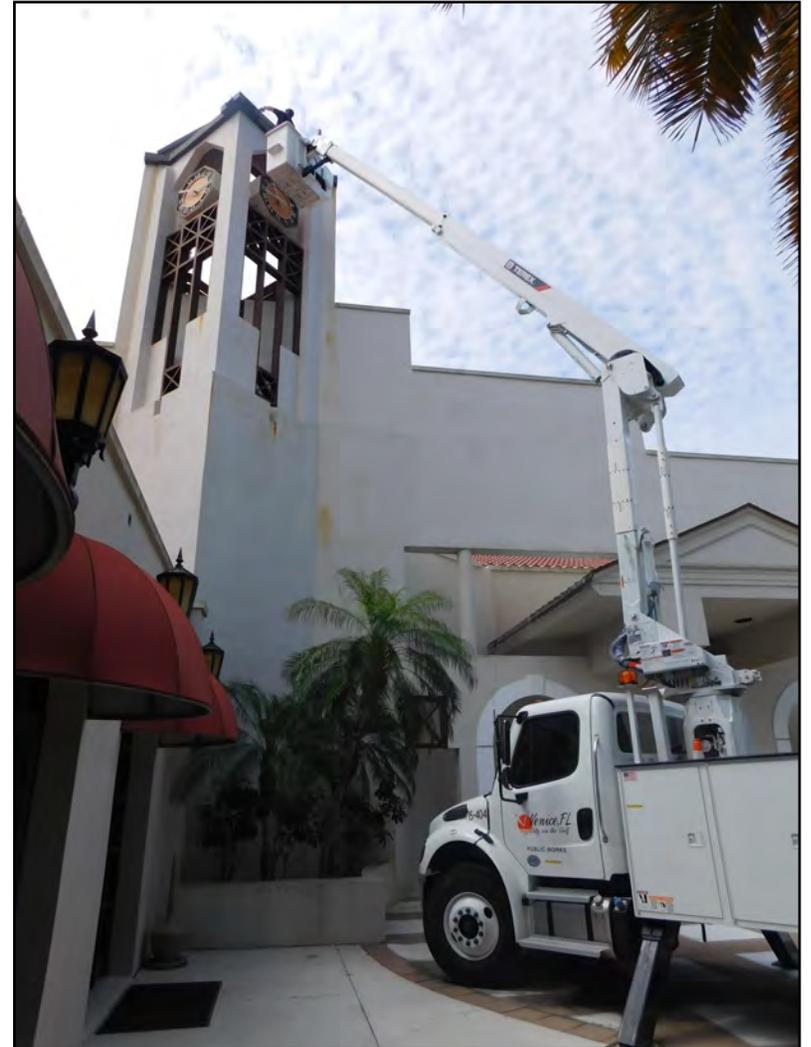
### AROUND TOWN



Venice Fire Rescue, in coordination with city employees and volunteers, attached evacuation “collars” to stop signs within city limits. The collars notify residents as to what evacuation zone they reside in. Sarasota County EOC funds paid for all 250 collars. Mayor John Holic kicked off the effort May 2 by attaching the first collar to the stop sign near the beach pavilion at the end of Venice Avenue.



Venice Police Chief Tom Mattmuller, third from left, attends the 2016 Law Enforcement Memorial May 17 at Sarasota Memorial Hospital.



Public Works staff does maintenance on the clock tower at City Hall. May 15-21 was National Public Works Week.

### AROUND TOWN



At left, the Venice Police Department assisted with an underwater cleanup May 21 at the Venice Pier near Sharky's, sponsored by the Suncoast Reef Rovers, a local dive club.



Engineering promoted "Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day" on May 20. Pictured are leader of the effort John Monville, stormwater engineer, in front; with Jeff Hackett, engineering/stormwater tech I; Kathleen Weeden, city engineer; James Clinch, assistant city engineer; Cathy Dobre, projects coordinator; Ryan Burns, engineering/stormwater tech II; and Gillian Carney, stormwater/engineering research analyst.



Mayor John Holic leads a "Bike with the Mayor" ride around Venice on May 14.