

County may modify waste collections contract

Meeting about changes in two weeks

By PHIL ATTINGER
STAFF WRITER

SEBRING — Waste Connections officials asked for and got a workshop Tuesday with Highlands County commissioners to discuss their contract.

County commissioners told staff to meet with the company officials about possible contract modifications for discussion at the June 2 meeting, in two weeks.

Commissioners hope to gather public input on

possible amendments, make adjustments, and make a decision as early as June 16.

Kurt Salac, director of Municipal Business Development and Governmental Affairs for Waste Connections in Florida, called the current contract, including collecting recyclables in a dead market, “unsustainable.”

Salac also said a 70% drop in the market for recyclable material, high standards for zero load contamination, 30-40% contamination rate for local recycling loads and 20% rate increases for trucking

and processing have all but eliminated the company's bottom line.

He said the company expected to spend \$1 million on a hauling facility at the Highlands County landfill and \$500,000 on a recycling facility, but the recycling building cost \$1.3 million and the hauling facility is no longer feasible — even though the contract demands it.

In a presentation, County Engineer Clinton

COUNTY | 2A

Surveys seek input on fall school reopening

By MARC VALERO
STAFF WRITER

SEBRING — Many have responded to the School Board of Highlands County's surveys about returning to school in the fall with still many unknowns concerning reopenings after the COVID-19 closures.



LONGSHORE

There is a survey for district staff and another survey for parents, students and the general public.

Superintendent Brenda Longshore said both surveys will close on Friday, but since things are changing so rapidly, she might do the survey again in the second and third weeks of June and then have some options for parents and students by July 1.

“They [parents] have supplied a number of resources of things that would help them increase their confidence level for their child to return to school, everything from masks and temperature checks to making sure that sick children don't come in to school,” she said, adding that respondents have a lot of good ideas they included in their surveys.

About 1,000 staff members have responded thus far, she said. “About 70% would like to come right back in face-to-face trying to do everything we can do to make it as safe as possible.”

According to the district's 2020-21 calendar, teachers would start on Aug. 3 with students returning for class on Aug. 11.

The other survey is for parents, students and the community, Longshore said, which also had a good response with 4,000 thus far.

“That was very positive I thought,” she said. About 68% are ready to jump back

SCHOOL | 7A

Perez gives God credit for COVID-19 recovery



COURTESY PHOTO/ADVENTHEALTH SEBRING

AdventHealth Sebring staff line up to cheer Ivette's return home after a long fight with COVID-19. Her husband Jesus pushes the wheelchair.

Leaves hospital after nearly two months

By KIM MOODY
STAFF WRITER

This good news story sponsored by Sebring Meats, 3721 Kenilworth Blvd., Sebring, FL 33870; 863-314-6177.

SEBRING — When Ivette and Jesus Perez said their wedding vows to stick together in sickness and in health until death do they part, they may never have imagined how coronavirus would test those vows 34 years later. Doctors, nurses and other hospital staff lined the long hallway and waved pom-poms as the the couple left AdventHealth Sebring on Tuesday. Ivette wore a Wonder Woman outfit complete with crown. Her ride was in a wheelchair however, not an invisible jet. Tears of joy ran down her face and some of the faces of those who were part of her treatment team.

Perez was escorted home by the Highlands County Sheriff's Office where she is a volunteer chaplain. Perez and Jesus are co-pastors



COURTESY PHOTO

A happy Ivette Perez is seen here smiling despite her hospitalization for COVID-19.



COURTESY PHOTO/ADVENTHEALTH SEBRING

Ivette and Jesus Perez are ecstatic to be on their way home after she was in the hospital almost two months with COVID-19.

of Casa de la Adoracion y Alabanza (House of Praise and Worship) at 4708 Kenilworth Blvd. in

Sebring. Both say her healing was a gift

PEREZ | 7A



Cases By The County

Alachua	339	Lee	1,520
Baker	26	Leon	304
Bay	86	Levy	25
Bradford	49	Liberty	199
Brevard	371	Madison	64
Broward	6,369	Manatee	888
Calhoun	40	Marion	224
Charlotte	392	Martin	396
Citrus	114	Miami-Dade	15,942
Clay	321	Monroe	99
Collier	1,030	Nassau	66
Columbia	113	Okaloosa	180
Desoto	69	Okeechobee	43
Dixie	26	Orange	1,699
Duval	1,318	Osceola	629
Escambia	719	Palm Beach	4,699
Flagler	167	Pasco	327
Franklin	2	Pinellas	1,062
Gadsden	242	Polk	766
Gilchrist	8	Putnam	134
Glades	13	Santa Rosa	186
Gulf	1	Sarasota	533
Hamilton	147	Seminole	442
Hardee	44	St. Johns	233
Hendry	224	St. Lucie	337
Hernando	109	Sumter	253
Highlands	107	Suwanee	160
Hillsborough	1,670	Taylor	5
Holmes	10	Union	26
Indian River	108	Volusia	612
Jackson	148	Wakulla	32
Jefferson	28	Walton	91
Lafayette	6	Washington	14
Lake	257		

*Florida Department of Health As of 11 a.m. May 19, 2020

Florida's COVID-19 death toll surpasses 2,000

By MARC VALERO
STAFF WRITER

SEBRING — The state COVID-19 death toll surpassed 2,000 for a total of 2,052, according to the Florida Department of Health.

The number of cases during the pandemic in Highlands is now at 107 with two new virus cases reported on Monday.

The number of deaths in Highlands remains at 8, with overall 37 having been hospitalized due to COVID-19.

The demographics of the resident cases in Highlands show an age range of 0 to 85 with

a median age of 61, with 53 males and 53 females having tested positive.

The Florida Department of Health Highlands will be having more drive-thru COVID-19 testing events on the following dates:

- Thursday, May 21 from 5-7 p.m. at the Florida Department of Health Highlands County, 7205 S. George Blvd., in Sebring.

- Tuesday, May 26 from 9-11 a.m. at Memorial Elementary School, 867 S. Memorial Drive, Sebring.

Okeechobee County has added 20 new cases

in the past six days including 7 new cases on May 13 and 8 new cases on Sunday for a total of 45 cases, but no deaths. Hardee County has 44 cases and no deaths.

Miami-Dade County has 28% of the state's deaths with 578. After a spike of 545 new cases in Dade on Saturday, there were 173 new cases on Sunday and 126 on Monday for a total of 15,942.

Nationwide, there have been 1,517,681 cases and 90,802 deaths.

Worldwide, there have been 4,624,817 cases and 319,213 deaths.



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Good morning To
Wayne Shelters
Thanks for reading!

