

Michael Bolton to take the stage in Clearwater on Jan. 25. **5B**



ALSO INSIDE



Clearwater Beach

A new restaurant on Clearwater Beach is banking on its cryptocurrency theme. **5A**

Redington Beach

Town updates its rules in an effort to regulate live-aboard vessels and crack down on derelict vessels. **3A**

Seminole

Rotary Clubs continue to make a difference for those in need. **4A**



Tarpon Springs

Thousands flock to Tarpon Springs to witness a joyful Epiphany celebration. **4A**

Events

Are you still unsure what to do this weekend or next? Then check out our community calendar. **10A**

Entertainment

The Dunedin Fine Art Center's latest exhibit proves small works can be a big deal. **2B**

ALSO ONLINE

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Dunedin

The city's tennis players say pickleball is causing them a problem.

E-edition

Want to share the paper with family or friends? Check out an electronic version of this week's paper that you can download.



Education

Pinellas superintendent to retire

Michael Grego, 'dean of Florida superintendents,' has led the district for the past decade

By JEFFREY S. SOLOCHEK
Tampa Bay Times

Pinellas County school superintendent Michael Grego announced Jan. 6 that he will retire from the district on July 1, ending an education career that spanned more than four decades.

"It's a culmination of 42 wonderful years in public education, all in the state of Florida," said Grego, who emailed friends and supporters with the news early in the day. "I've loved every minute of it."

Grego has led the Pinellas district for the past 10 years. Before joining the district, he worked as superintendent of Osceola County schools, state chancellor of K-12 schools and as-

stant superintendent of Hillsborough County schools, where he spent 28 years, mostly as an administrator.

He said the timing is right for him to go. He'll turn 65 in the spring, and he feels good about the district's situation and direction.

"It's time to pass the baton off," Grego said in an interview, adding he plans to remain in the community after retirement. "I see only bright things for Pinellas."

Superintendent turnover in Florida has been high lately among Florida's largest districts.

Broward and Miami-Dade counties have superintendent searches ongoing, as does Lee County, which this week announced five finalists for its

top job. The Palm Beach and Polk school districts hired new superintendents within the past year.

School Board chairperson Eileen Long praised Grego — Florida's 2018 superintendent of the year — for bringing stability and success to the district. She cited his efforts to help increase graduation rates and upgrade school buildings among other improvements.

"Dr. Grego has put us in such a wonderful spot," said Long, a retired teacher who didn't always hold the superintendent in such high regard. "Now we're looking forward."

Long recalled the "roller coaster"

See GREGO, page 4A



Michael Grego, who has served as superintendent of Pinellas County schools for the past 10 years, will retire on July 1.



Treasure Island

Seawall project gets more funding

Project now includes Boca Ciega Bay water quality improvements

By MARK SCHANTZ
TBN Correspondent

TREASURE ISLAND — A plan by the city to replace its dilapidated seawall at Treasure Bay Golf and Tennis Center with a living shoreline has been approved and amended to include improving water quality in Boca Ciega Bay.

Assistant Public Works Director Stacy Boyles advised commissioners the "city was notified that additional funds were available in support of our project, specifically project elements that improve water quality to Boca Ciega Bay."

The proposed addendum to the project, approved by city commissioners at their Jan. 4 meeting, increases the funding provided by Tampa Bay Estuary Program by \$28,875 and extends the timeline to better align with future potential grants.

TBEP will provide \$202,099, Boyles said, and the city's match will remain \$193,832, with \$10,577 being in-kind services.

The city entered into an agreement with the TBEP in June 2020 to complete a living shoreline and water quality improvement project at Treasure Bay. The project was slightly slowed down in hopes of getting additional

See SHORELINE, page 2A

LIFE AT THE BEACH

Pinellas beaches to host to a variety of events over the coming weeks

By JERRY STOCKFISCH • Tampa Bay Newspapers

Madeira Beach

Another beach bash that had been muffled by the coronavirus pandemic is back at full strength, with the John's Pass Seafood Festival invading the Madeira Beach fishing village and tourist center Jan. 20-23.

"We're excited to be moving forward," said Sonny Flynn, head of the John's Pass Merchants Association. "Everything's a 'go.'"

The annual event, one of the most popular attractions along the Gulf beaches, has drawn as many as 250,000 people over its long weekend. Last year, the party was scaled back significantly, re-billed as the "John's Pass Arts Weekend" and missing key ingredients: beer, bands, and seafood.

"We're having everything this year," Flynn said. "Three stages of entertainment, beer, food,

vendors. Everybody's excited."

While the surge in COVID-19 cases due to the omicron variant may be daunting, Flynn — owner of the Alligator & Wildlife Discovery Center at the Pass — said safety is top of mind.

"We want everybody to have fun, but stay healthy," she said. "Obviously, we'll have signage out for people to please wash their hands, and we're taking precautions with vendors as well, making sure they're following safety protocols."

Volunteers will be roaming the grounds promoting social distancing. "I can't believe we're still doing that, but it needs to be done," Flynn said.

That means the "World's Largest Bloody

See EVENTS, page 6A

March 15 Elections

Election season arrives in Pinellas County

County featuring many contested municipal races

Tampa Bay Newspapers

With the new year comes a new election season, and from St. Pete Beach to Tarpon Springs, Pinellas County has plenty of races coming up.

Municipal elections will be held March 15.

The voter registration deadline is Feb. 14. According to the Supervisor of Elections, municipalities have chosen not to conduct early voting. The

deadline for a mail ballot is Feb. 10. To request a mail ballot, email mailballot@votepinellas.gov or call 727-464-8683.

Here's a look at the contested races and those already decided.

Belleair

Deputy Mayor Tom Kurey and Commissioner Tom Shelly were automatically appointed to commission seats when no one qualified to run

Inside

The St. Pete Beach District 1 City Commission race will feature a rematch. **2A**

against them.

A charter amendment on the ballot intends to make the potential abolishment of the police department more difficult by requiring a 5-0 vote from the commission as well as more than 60 percent of voters.

Belleair Beach

The mayor has an opponent, and there will be six candidates running for three open seats on the seven-member council. Mayor Joseph Manzo is running for reelection and is opposed by council member Dave Gattis, who currently serves as vice mayor.

Lloyd Roberts, Berc Sarafian, Lynda Kathryn Welch, and Mike Zabel are newcomers to politics.

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