Pinellas County, Florida’s Profile

Pinellas County is located on the western coast of Florida, on a peninsula, bounded on the east by Tampa Bay and on the west by the Gulf of Mexico. Pinellas County has the second smallest land area in Florida, but is the most densely populated of the sixty-seven counties. The County is thirty-eight miles long and fifteen miles across at its widest. The sparkling water of the Gulf of Mexico, our award winning beaches, stunning sunsets and balmy weather make Pinellas an inviting destination for visitors and home to a diverse population.

There are opportunities for leisure, recreational and cultural activities in many different venues, including outstanding golf facilities, other sports facilities, fishing, and boating as well as diverse cultural history locations. The spring training home base for the Philadelphia Phillies and the Toronto Blue Jays is situated in Pinellas County. This is also home of the major league baseball team and American League Champion Tampa Bay Rays in St. Petersburg. Botanical exhibits at Pinewood Cultural Park and cultural history depicted at Heritage Village offer a glimpse of the past and the natural flora and fauna.

In May 2008, Dr. Stephen Leatherman, better known as Dr. Beach, recognized Caladesi Island as the number one beach in the United States for 2008, marking the second time one of our areas beaches took the top spot on his list. Also in March 2008, Trip Advisor, named Fort De Soto Park’s North beach the country’s top beach. Both of these accolades generated positive national and international publicity for the County.
A Message from Ken Burke

Citizens of Pinellas County:

I am pleased to present the Citizens’ Guide to County Finances for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2008. As your elected Clerk, I serve as the Chief Financial Officer of the Board of County Commissioners and share fiscal responsibility for County funds with them. This report provides you, the citizens, a brief analysis of where County revenues came from and where those dollars were spent during the last fiscal year. It is designed to give you an easy-to-read synopsis of the County’s financial health.

In addition to this report, the Finance Division also produces the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) which contains more detailed financial information. The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to Pinellas County for its CAFR for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2007, the 27th consecutive year that we have achieved this prestigious award.

The Citizens’ Guide to County Finances summarizes the financial activities of the primary government of Pinellas County. This report condenses and simplifies the format used in our CAFR as of September 30, 2008. This report does not conform to generally accepted accounting principals and governmental reporting standards. This report’s format is designed so that the non-financial reader can easily understand the County’s financial activities. The GFOA awarded Pinellas County the Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2007.

The CAFR as well as this report are accessible at the Clerk’s website at http://www.pinellasclerk.org/aspInclude2/ASPInclude.asp?pageName=reports.htm#cafr.

If you have any comments or suggestions on how we may improve this report, please contact my office at (727) 464-3341.

I thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Clerk and hope that you find this Citizens’ Guide to County Finances informative and useful in enhancing your understanding of our County’s finances.

Sincerely,

Ken Burke, CPA
Clerk of the Circuit Court
The Clerk of the Circuit Court was established as a public trustee by the Florida Constitution in 1838. Today, the Florida Statutes assign over 926 tasks to the Clerk of the Circuit Court. The Clerk serves as the Clerk of the Circuit and County Courts, Recorder of Deeds, Clerk and Accountant to the Board of County Commissioners, custodian of all county funds and as the County Auditor. The Clerk’s role as an elected public trustee is considered to be one of the most important aspects of the position because he serves at the will of the people. It is the Clerk’s responsibility to serve as a “watchdog” for the citizens of Pinellas County to ensure funds expended are only for a public purpose and for the benefit of the public as a whole.

As Clerk of the Circuit and County Courts

- maintains custody of court records
- maintains custody of all related pleadings filed
- secures evidence entered in court
- ensures integrity of court files is protected
- collects and disburses court fines and assessments and court ordered child support
- summons prospective jurors

As Recorder of Deeds

- maintains Official Records of Pinellas County and ensures their integrity is protected

As Clerk and Accountant of the Board of County Commissioners

- maintains official records of the Board
- maintains county financial records and prepares financial reports
- provides accounting services to all departments under the Board
- programs and maintains software for the automated financial accounting system
- processes accounts payable, accounts receivable and payroll and pre-audits all payments

As Custodian of all County funds

- receives and records county revenue
- invests county funds

As County Auditor

- performs comptroller function in pre-audit of invoices before payment
- performs internal audits on county departments
About This Report

This Popular Report provides an overview of the areas of responsibility and the operations of Pinellas County's Constitutional Officers and excludes component units:

- Board of County Commissioners (BCC)
- Property Appraiser
- Sheriff
- Clerk of the Circuit Court
- Supervisor of Elections
- Tax Collector

The financial information presented here is summarized and does not substitute for the County's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). The CAFR outlines the County's financial position and operating activities for the year in great detail and in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Pages 7 through 10 of this report reflects the sources and uses of County funds within governmental activities and pages 13 through 14 represent revenues and expenses of business-type activities. They are distinguished as follows:

- **Governmental activities** include most of the basic services offered to citizens, including tax assessment and collections, fire and law enforcement protection, judicial services, emergency medical services, civil emergency services, construction and maintenance of highways, streets and other infrastructure, economic development, social and human services, and cultural and recreational services. Property and sales and use taxes, intergovernmental revenues and various user fees finance these operations.

- **Business-type activities** include the water, sewer, solid waste and airport systems that are financed by fees charged to customers.

Revenues and expenditures of the General Fund for the last two years are shown on pages 11 through 12. Information on the County's capital assets, outstanding bond issues and investments is included on pages 15 through 16.
The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has given an Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting to Pinellas County, Florida for its Popular Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2007. The Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting is a prestigious national award recognizing conformance with the highest standards for preparation of state and local government popular reports.

In order to receive an Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting, a government unit must publish a Popular Annual Financial Report, whose contents conform to program standards of creativity, presentation, understandability, and reader appeal.

An Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting is valid for a period of one year only. We believe our current report continues to conform to the Popular Annual Financial Reporting requirements, and we are submitting it to GFOA.
Pinellas County Government

Pinellas County is a charter county established under the Constitution and laws of the State of Florida in 1911. In 1968, the Florida Constitution was amended to provide home rule powers for counties and municipalities. The voters of Pinellas County approved the first home rule charter in 1980. Pinellas was the first county in Florida to operate under a Board of County Commissioners/Administrator form of government. The elected Constitutional Officers include the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Supervisor of Elections, Tax Collector, Property Appraiser and Sheriff. The seven member Board serves as the legislative body, and budgets and provides the funding for its departments, the entire operations of the Sheriff and the Supervisor of Elections and portions of the operations for the other Constitutional Officers.

Board of County Commissioners

Neil Brickfield - District 1
nbrickfield@pinellascounty.org

Calvin D. Harris, Chairman - District 2
charris@pinellascounty.org

Nancy Bostock - District 3
cnbostock@pinellascounty.org

Susan Latvala - District 4
slatvala@pinellascounty.org

Karen Williams Seel, Vice-Chairman - District 5
kseel@pinellascounty.org

John Morroni - District 6
jmorroni@pinellascounty.org

Kenneth T. Welch - District 7
ktwelch@pinellascounty.org

Constitutional Officers

Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court
www.pinellasclerk.org

Deborah Clark, Supervisor of Elections
www.votepinellas.com

Diane Nelson, Tax Collector
www.taxcollect.com

Pam Dubov, Property Appraiser
www.pcpao.org

Jim Coats, Sheriff
www.pscoweb.com
Sources of County Funds

Pinellas County receives its revenues to fund governmental activities from various sources. Revenue is generated from property taxes, charges for services, sales and other taxes, grants and interest income. In fiscal year 2007-2008, 52 percent of the County’s governmental activities revenues came from property taxes.

Governmental Activities Revenues
(dollars in thousands)

Revenues in the County’s governmental activities decreased $39.7 million or 4 percent from the prior year. The countywide property tax levy was reduced by 10.6 percent for fiscal year 2007-2008; after a reduction of 10.3 percent in the prior year. Taxable assessed values increased by 6 percent countywide resulting in an 5.2 percent net decrease in property tax revenues or $26.6 million from last year for all governmental activities.

Charges for services, the only category of revenues that increased during the year, were up by $4.7 million over last year, attributable mostly to increases in user fees. Grant revenue decreased by $5.2 million from the prior year due to completion of some major grant funded capital projects such as the Belleair Causeway Bridge. Investment income in governmental activities decreased by $5.6 million or 28.9 percent from last fiscal year due primarily to reductions in the federal funds rate from 4.75 percent in October 2007 to 2 percent in September 2008. Long term rates decreased as well. Fuel tax revenue decreased last year by $3.3 million or 16.4 percent from the prior year.
The county faces financial challenges in the future due to the combined effects of the economic recession, the real estate market downturn and property tax reform. County revenues have decreased over the last year and are forecast to decrease further in future years due to these impacts.

During the budget development process for fiscal year 2007-2008, the County was faced with significant reductions in property tax revenue, the largest revenue source for the General fund, for two reasons. In fiscal year 2008, the Florida State Legislature required Pinellas County to roll back revenues by 7 percent. The Legislature also implemented a property tax cap, limiting future increases in property taxes. In January 2008, voters approved Amendment One, resulting in the “doubling” of the homestead exemption (school taxes exempt) and implemented the portability of the Save Our Homes exemption. The impact of the decline in taxable assessed values will be seen in future years. The charts below show the trends in taxable assessed values and property tax revenues over the last 3 years.
Revenue Descriptions

General Revenues

Property taxes are ad valorem taxes levied on an assessed valuation of real and/or personal property. These taxes are collected annually and are computed as a percentage of the Fair Market value of locally assesses real estate, and tangible personal property. Property Taxes are considered general revenue for the county.

Sales taxes and other taxes are comprised of the following:

The 1 cent infrastructure sales tax or the Penny for Pinellas is imposed for funding infrastructure projects that normally would have to be funded by increased property taxes or other revenue sources. The Penny for Pinellas is earmarked for capital improvement projects for roads, flood control, park improvements, preservation of endangered lands and public safety. The Penny for Pinellas is paid by all who spend money in the county, including tourists and visitors.

The tourist development tax is a local tax imposed on most rents or leases, which have been contracted for periods of (6) months or less, or living accommodations in hotels, motels, apartment houses, rooming houses, and mobile home parks. The revenues are used for tourist development, beach renourishment, debt service and promoting and advertising tourism internationally, nationally and in the State of Florida.

Franchise taxes were collected from cable companies in 2007. The County no longer assesses franchise fees.

Fuel tax (local option gas tax) is a tax on every net gallon of motor and diesel fuel sold in Pinellas County. It is a county imposed tax for the purpose of paying the cost of establishing, operating and maintaining a transportation system and related facilities and the cost of acquisition, construction, reconstruction and maintenance of roads and streets.

Communication services tax is comprised of two components: a state communications services tax and a local communication services tax. The tax is imposed on retail sales of communications services which originate and terminate in the state, or originate or terminate in the state and are billed to an address within the state. Communications services are defined as voice, data, audio, video or any other information or signals, including cable services.

Unrestricted interest is the revenue earned from investments.

Program Revenues

Charges for services are made up of fees collected from the public for services rendered (e.g. court costs, building permits, park fees, animal licenses, etc.)

Capital and operating grants are monies received to fund the operating and acquisition of capital assets of a specific program or project. Operating expenses can include salaries and wages, rent, utilities and more.
Uses of County Funds

Governmental activities include most of the basic services offered to citizens, including tax assessment and collections, election services, fire and law enforcement protection, judicial services, emergency medical services, civil emergency services, construction and maintenance of highways, streets and other infrastructure, natural resource conservation, economic development and community development, social and human services, and cultural and recreational services. Property and sales and use taxes, intergovernmental revenues and various user fees finance these operations.

Governmental Activities Expenses
(dollars in thousands)

The cost of governmental activities increased 6.4 percent or $54.9 million over the prior year. Public safety expenses were $444.5 million or 48 percent of total governmental activities. The largest increase was in the public safety function representing $41.2 million, which was attributable mostly to the increased costs of Sheriff’s operations, emergency medical and emergency communication services. General government expenses representing 22 percent of total governmental activities, increased by $6.3 million or 3.2 percent over the prior year. The County continued enacting cost saving measures during the year and building on efficiencies gained through departmental reorganizations and program reductions to offset rising costs. Revenues exceeded expenditures for the year by $28.1 million, reflecting a $94.6 million or 77 percent decline from the prior year excess of $122.8 million.
The General Fund is the primary operating fund of the County that accounts for all financial resources of the general government, except for those that are required to be accounted for in another fund. At the end of the fiscal year, the unreserved fund balance in the general fund was $165.9 million, decreasing by $11 million or 6.2 percent from the prior year. Key factors attributing to the decline were as follows:

- Overall General Fund revenues were down by $22 million or 3.8 percent from last year.
- Tax revenue decreased by $20.9 million, due primarily to decreased property taxes of $20.2 million or 4.7 percent.
- Interest revenue was down by $5 million or 33.1 percent from last year due to significant reductions in interest rates during the fiscal year and a reduction in funds available for investment.
- Miscellaneous revenues were up $3 million due to increased revenue for Sheriff services and reimbursements from other agencies for welfare assistance provided to indigent residents. Charges for services were up $3 million over last year due primarily to increased revenue for housing federal prisoners.
- Transfers in represents monies transferred from other funds to pay for programs within the General fund and unspent monies from the Constitutional Officers at fiscal year end.
The General Fund is used to pay the regular operating and administrative expenses of the BCC not accounted for in other funds. Also included in General Fund are other uses, which are transfers out paid to the Constitutional Officers for law enforcement and detention services, election services, tax assessment and collection services and financial and administrative services, representing 56% of the General Fund’s total outlays.

Overall General Fund expenditures declined slightly by 1 percent or $2.6 million. Expenditures were $147.9 million less than budgeted appropriations for the year. During the budget development process for fiscal year 2007-2008, the County anticipated revenue reductions and tried to financially position itself for the impacts by reducing or eliminating selected non-essential programs, minimizing major enhancements in the Board’s major strategic focus areas, reducing reserves, and reducing full-time positions. In spite of reductions in many areas, the Board was able to provide additional funding for certain strategic programs to benefit the community such as affordable housing development, enhancements in law enforcement and emergency management programs, new optical scanning voting equipment and an elections center.
Enterprise Fund Revenues and Expenses

The following charts reflect the Enterprise Fund Revenues and Expenses for the last two years.

Enterprise Fund Revenues

Enterprise Fund Expenses

Enterprise Fund or business-type activities offer goods and services of the county for sale and are intended to be self-supporting. Revenues in business-type activities decreased 8.1 percent from the prior year by $20.9 million. Expenses increased by 3.3 percent or $7 million.
Enterprise Fund Revenues and Expenses

The Business-type activities of the county are:

Water System
- Total program revenues for the Water System, including interest revenue, miscellaneous revenue and capital contributions, decreased by $3.6 million or 3.9 percent.
- Charges for services to retail and wholesale customers decreased approximately $.8 million due to decreased consumption in spite of a 3 percent increase in wholesale and retail water rates, effective in December 2007.
- Interest earnings declined by 20.8 percent as a result of significant reductions in interest rates.
- Operating expenses of the Water System increased by 2.4 percent or $2.3 million over last year.

Sewer System
- Total program revenues for the Sewer System decreased slightly by $38,000 compared to the prior year.
- Charges for services to retail and wholesale customers decreased $1.4 million from the prior year. Interest revenue declined 49 percent or $2.3 million due to significant reductions in interest rates.
- The annual operating costs increased by $3 million or 5.9 percent as a result of increased cost for utility services, chemicals and repair and maintenance of equipment within the treatment and disposal system.

Solid Waste System
- Total program revenues of the system decreased by $14.9 million or 17.6 percent from the prior year.
- Charges for services decreased 16.7 percent or $12.9 million due primarily to the failure of a generating turbine at the waste to energy plant in May of 2008. As a result, electricity sales were down $11.9 million. Insurance recoveries of $10.7 million offset by a loss on disposal of the generator of $1.1 million were treated as an extraordinary item.
- Interest revenues decreased $1.9 million or 28.7 percent due to significant reductions in interest rates during the year and reductions in balances available for investment.
- Operating expenses for the system decreased $2.1 million or 3.9 percent from the prior year due to a decline in contract maintenance costs.

St. Petersburg/Clearwater International Airport
- Total program revenues for the Airport decreased by $2.4 million, or 12.4 percent from the prior year.
- Charges for services were up slightly by $.2 million due primarily to increased airline passenger services provided by Allegiant, however all other revenue sources declined by $2.2 million.
- Operating expenses rose $1.1 million or 9.6 percent. The majority of this increase was due to additional staffing to meet customer traffic in addition to normal wage increases.
Capital Assets

Capital Assets
Governmental and Business-Type Activities
(dollars in thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Amount</th>
<th>Issue Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Issue Amount</th>
<th>Amount Outstanding at year end</th>
<th>Current Maturities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$ 155,520</td>
<td>September 2000</td>
<td>Capital Improvement Revenue Bonds, Series 2000</td>
<td>$ 36,225</td>
<td>$ 17,605</td>
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<td>$ 26,620</td>
<td>July 2002</td>
<td>Capital Improvement Revenue Bonds, Series 2002</td>
<td>$ 7,810</td>
<td>$ 3,830</td>
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<td>$ 86,580</td>
<td>January 2003</td>
<td>Sewer Revenue Bonds, Series 2003</td>
<td>$ 79,100</td>
<td>$ 1,735</td>
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<td>$ 25,205</td>
<td>November 2006</td>
<td>Sewer Revenue Refunding Bonds, Series 2006</td>
<td>$ 25,160</td>
<td>$ 105</td>
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<td>$ 42,005</td>
<td>July 2008</td>
<td>Sewer Revenue Bonds, Series 2008 A</td>
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<td>$ 32,700</td>
<td>July 2008</td>
<td>Sewer Revenue Refunding Bonds, Series 2008 B-1</td>
<td>$ 32,700</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$ 473,425 $ 254,405 $ 26,715

Outstanding Bond Issues
(dollars in thousands)
**Investment Policy**

The Clerk of the Circuit Court, through the Finance Division, conducts all investment activity of the Board of County Commissioners in accordance with Florida Statute on Local Government Investment Policies (Section 218.415) as well as the investment ordinance adopted by the Board (Pinellas County Code, Investment of Surplus Public Funds, Section 2-144). The Board's investment policy applies to all funds in excess of those required to meet current expenses for the Board of County Commissioners.

**Investment Objectives**

- Safety - Protection of the County funds.
- Liquidity - Provide sufficient liquidity to meet the County's operating, payroll and capital expenses.
- Income - Maximize the return but avoid assuming unreasonable risk.

**PINELLAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO**

(dollars in thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Agency Issues</td>
<td>$347,635</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Funds Money Market</td>
<td>$103,037</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Board of Administration (SBA)</td>
<td>$2,647</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash Pools</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$654,776</strong></td>
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Accomplishments

General Government

During the year, the Board consolidated the Information Systems Department and the Information Technology Department to form the Business Technology Services Department (BTS), the central technology office within the organization, resulting in significant cost savings and operational efficiencies.

The Clerk’s Office concentrated much of its efforts this past year in the areas of paperless initiatives and enhancement of customer service. Two major paperless projects in the traffic and probate court areas were completed. An on-line self help program was established where customers can from the comfort of their homes access and complete forms in small claims, landlord/tenant, and family law related matters. Also, small claims and domestic violence informational videos have been created and posted on the Clerk’s website and on YouTube. A cyber café for jurors was completed this past year to allow jurors to have a more pleasant stay while serving on jury duty.

A countywide energy and water management policy was approved by the Board and implemented during the year by the Real Estate Management Department to establish the framework to promote and incentivize energy and water reduction goals and objectives, identify and implement energy and water conservation activities and identify/establish required resources.

Public Safety

The Emergency Medical Services and Fire Administration Department received a Future of the Region Award from the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council for its Early Warning Biosurveillance System. For patients experiencing heart attacks, paramedics are now transmitting electrocardiograms to hospitals and cardiologists from the ambulance.

The Emergency Communications Department upgraded Sheriff’s Office 9-1-1 equipment to a digital platform that will be capable of next generation 9-1-1 (text, picture & video messaging, etc.) to be implemented in future years.

The Emergency Management Department also continued its efforts to expand hurricane shelter plans through coordination with the School Board and retrofit work on existing shelters that enhance their capacity and capabilities.
Accomplishments

Economic Environment

St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport has a yearly local impact of over one-half billion dollars, with its tenants employing more than 2,000 people. Allegiant Airlines expanded its service during the year. There is also a new ground lease in place for the construction of a new aviation facility on the Airport complex.

During the year, the County entered into a license, purchase and sale, land use restriction and environmental indemnity agreement with a developer to develop Toytown, a 240-acre closed landfill in mid-county with excellent interstate access. The project would include 2 million square feet of office space; 1.5 million square feet of retail; 375 hotel rooms with 50,000 square feet of meeting and convention space; and a 2,113-unit residential village with a workforce housing component. Importantly, the proposal also includes 70 acres of new parks and recreation facilities.

Physical Environment

During the year the Utilities Department completed several projects such as construction of several segments of the Gulf Boulevard roadway project improvements including a new reclaimed water main and replacement of potable water and sewer lines and the Belleair force main and reclaimed water main project. The Solid Waste Department developed a countywide recycling program and received BCC approval to implement it. The Customer Service Department implemented a new customer information and billing system converting from cash to accrual basis for daily financial reporting. They also automated the internal invoicing process for approximately 400 county accounts. Through ongoing conservation education, the per capita water usage rate in the county has declined over 40 percent over the past eighteen years.

Bald eagle nest in County preserve
**Future Initiatives**

**General Government**

A main goal of the Property Appraiser’s Office for the coming year is a CAMA (Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal) software conversion, the first conversion in 30 years. The upgrade will allow better productivity throughout each department by removing the “middleman” for property reports and data updates.

The Sixth Judicial Circuit has established a juvenile arrest diversion project to begin exploring alternative approaches to addressing juvenile delinquency in hopes of averting unnecessary arrests and lowering the county’s juvenile rearrest rates. This planning collaborative involves key criminal justice, juvenile justice and community stakeholders.

The County has contracted to perform a records management and retention study to determine the best means to consolidate, manage and retain active records. The Building Design and Construction Division will move forward with the design and construction of the new Public Works Emergency Responders building. The Fleet Management Department will implement the fleet standardization program during the coming year for ongoing reductions in fleet acquisition, maintenance and fuel cost. The Department also plans to reduce the use of fossil fuels with the increased use of biodiesel and hybrid technology as pricing becomes more competitive and cost effective.

**Economic Environment**

Future initiatives for the Airport include commencement of new airline service by Allegiant Airlines to three new destinations, approval of new minimum standards for fixed based operators and also updating the Airport’s Rules and Regulations and assessing recommendations for implementation of the golf course feasibility study.

**Physical Environment**

The Utilities Department will continue planning for the Water Blending Facility plant and buildings. Additional constructions projects will be underway in the future including: the Belcher Road 48 inch water transmission main replacement, a hazardous waste storage building, a new Household Electronics Chemical 3 facility, completion of the design and installation of on-site Sodium Hypochlorite generation at the Water Reclamation facilities to replace the gaseous chlorine system, and implementation of turbine blowers that will provide forty percent electrical reduction at the South Cross Bayou Facility. The Utilities Department also plans to participate in five water and wastewater national research projects and partner with the University of South Florida and others in the investigation and development of innovative water monitoring technologies.
Pinellas County Government is committed to progressive public policy, superior public service, courteous public contact, judicious exercise of authority and sound management of public resources, to meet the needs and concerns of our citizens today and tomorrow.