Pinellas County, Florida
Citizens’ Guide to County Finances
for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2015
Citizens of Pinellas County:

It is my pleasure to present the Citizens’ Guide to County Finances (Citizens’ Guide) for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2015. 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 also shows trend information on revenues and expenditures for the last three fiscal years. It is designed to give you an easy-to-read synopsis of the County’s financial health.

The Citizens’ Guide summarizes the financial activities of the primary government of Pinellas County. The reports included in the Citizens’ Guide condense and simplify the format used in our Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) as of September 30, 2015 described below. The Citizens’ Guide does not conform to generally accepted accounting principles and governmental reporting standards. The report is prepared in this format so that the non-financial reader can easily understand it. The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded Pinellas County the Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2014 for its Citizens’ Guide for the ninth consecutive year.

In addition to the Citizens’ Guide, the Finance Division produces the CAFR which contains more detailed financial information. The GFOA awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to Pinellas County for its CAFR for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2014, the 34th consecutive year that we have achieved this prestigious award.

The CAFR as well as this report are accessible at the Clerk’s website at www.pinellasclerk.org or a copy may be obtained by contacting the Clerk’s Finance Division at 727-464-8300. If you have any comments or suggestions on how we may improve this report, please contact my office at (727) 464-3341.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Clerk and may you find this Citizens’ Guide informative and useful in enhancing your understanding of our county’s finances.

Sincerely,

Ken Burke, CPA
Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller
This Citizens’ Guide provides an overview of the areas of responsibility and the operations of Pinellas County’s Constitutional Officers as listed below and excludes component units:

- Board of County Commissioners (BCC)
- Property Appraiser
- Sheriff
- Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller
- 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.

This report reflects the Sources and Uses of county funds as well as a summary of the governmental activities and 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.

Information on revenues and expenditures of the general fund for the last three years is shown on pages 10 through 11 of this report. Information on the county’s investments, capital assets, and outstanding bond issues and investments are included on pages 14 through 16.
Pinellas is an urban county 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’s population density is the highest of all sixty-seven Florida counties. This county is also the second smallest in land mass in Florida; measuring up to thirty-eight miles long and fifteen miles wide. The sparkling water of the Gulf of Mexico, award winning beaches, stunning sunsets and balmy weather make Pinellas an inviting destination for visitors and home to a diverse population of residents. During 2015, over 944,000 residents called Pinellas County home and the unemployment rate was 4.7 percent.

Leisure and recreational activities abound for residents and visitors of Pinellas County. Baseball is one of Pinellas County’s favored attractions as the proud home of the major league baseball team, the Tampa Bay Rays in St. Petersburg. Both the Philadelphia Phillies and the Toronto Blue Jays maintain their spring training quarters in Pinellas County in the cities of Clearwater and Dunedin. With the county surrounded on three sides by water, opportunities for fishing, boating and outdoor park activities are plentiful.

St. Petersburg and Clearwater beaches continually earn accolades for their white soft sand, sparkling blue waters and activities to delight beachgoers of all ages and interest. Clearwater Beach was named number 1 in the U.S. on TripAdvisor’s list of Top Beaches for 2016 and the only beach in America to make TripAdvisor’s list of Top 25 in the World. St. Pete Beach was also honored, coming in at number 4 on the best beach spots found in the U.S. St. Petersburg/Clearwater was the only destination in Florida to have two beaches in the Top 25, which is based on millions of travelers’ reviews on TripAdvisor.com. The readers of USA Today, ranked four area beaches, Clearwater Beach, Pass-A-Grille, Fort De Soto Park and Caladesi Island State Park) in its Top 10 in Florida.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRINCIPAL EMPLOYERS</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Percentage of Total County Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pinellas County School District</td>
<td>15,836</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bay Pines VA Medical Center</td>
<td>4,459</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Children’s Hospital</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of St. Petersburg</td>
<td>3,165</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinellas County Sheriff</td>
<td>2,732</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raymond James</td>
<td>2,650</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morton Plant Hospital</td>
<td>2,550</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Petersburg College</td>
<td>2,413</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Shopping Network</td>
<td>2,150</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mease Hospital</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 and Comptroller, 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.

**Constitutional Officers**
- Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller
- Deborah Clark, Supervisor of Elections
- Diane Nelson, Tax Collector
- Pam Dubov, Property Appraiser
- Bob Gualtieri, Sheriff

**Board of County Commissioners**
- Janet C. Long, Vice-Chairman - District 1
- Pat Gerard - District 2
- Charlie Justice, Chairman - District 3
- Dave Eggers - District 4
- Karen Williams Seel - District 5
- John Morroni - District 6
- Kenneth T. Welch - District 7

**Pinellas County Government**

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[Diagram of Pinellas County Government structure]

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[Contact information for each position]

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[Website links for each office and individual]
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, 2014. 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 receives its revenue to fund governmental activities from many sources including property taxes, sales and other taxes, charges for services, fees, fines and assessments, grants, and interest income. Total revenues for the county increased 5.3 percent over last year. Approximately 34.3 percent of the county’s total revenues come from property taxes and 13.1 percent from other taxes. Fees, service charges, revenues from other governments and unrestricted interest earnings account for 52.6 percent of overall revenues. Total expenses increased 2.4 percent over the prior year.

Revenues in the county’s governmental activities increased $45.4 million or 5.3 percent over the prior year. The cost of governmental activities increased 2.4 percent or $19.4 million from the prior year. Revenues exceeded expenses for the year by $64.5 million, compared to an excess of $38.5 million in the prior year. Key factors attributing to these changes are described below.

Property tax revenues increased by $24.6 million, or 6.4 percent over last year for all governmental activities due to an increase in property tax values of 6.5 percent since the countywide millage rate remained the same with the exception of some special districts in which the millage rates were modified as necessary to cover budgetary requirements.

Charges for services increased substantially during the year by $19.2 million or 9.3 percent, attributable mostly to three factors: 1) funding of $3.2 million from local hospitals in support of indigent health care services, 2) a $4.7 million increase in ambulance fees due to increased number of transports, and 3) a nonrecurring receipt of $9.6 million associated with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill settlement. Operating grants and contributions increased by $8.0 million from the prior year primarily due to 1) increased revenue of $3.8 million from the half-cent sales tax and state revenue sharing, 2) additional proceeds of $1.6 million related to the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program grant, and 3) an increase of $1.6 million in revenue recognized in the Sheriff’s Florida Department of Children and Families Fund, a fund used to account for services associated with the performance of child protective investigations. Sales tax revenue increased by $9.0 million; or 7.5 percent, reflecting signs of continued economic improvement in the area.
Property taxes help support programs and services that do not have offsetting revenues or pay for themselves. Examples include law enforcement, social services, parks and environmental programs. Other tax rates controlled by the county include Emergency Medical Services and fire districts in unincorporated areas.

Taxable assessed values increased by 6.3 percent countywide for FY2015 and 9.8 percent from FY2013.

Property tax revenues increased by $24.6 million (6.4 percent) for FY2015, and increased by $49.5 million (13.7 percent) from FY2013.
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 assessed 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 rentals or leases, which have been contracted for periods of six (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 re-nourishment, debt service and promoting and advertising tourism internationally, nationally and in the State of Florida.

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 service 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. Tax proceeds are transferred to the county. 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.)

Operating grants and contributions are monies received to fund the operating expenses of a specific program or project. Operating expenses can include salaries and wages, rent, utilities and more.

Capital grants and contributions are monies received for the acquisition of capital assets, such as buildings, land or equipment.
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 resources conservation, economic 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.

The cost of governmental activities increased 2.4 percent or $19.4 million from the prior year. The largest increases were in public safety of $8.2 million and economic environment of $9.7 million. Revenues exceeded expenses for the year by $64.5 million, compared to an excess of $38.5 million in the prior year.
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. Appropriations for the General Fund for FY2015 including reserves totaled $599.6 million.

Key financial factors for the year were as follows:

- Overall General Fund revenues and other financing sources increased by $32.3 million (6.8 percent) from last year. From FY2013 to FY2015, general fund revenues increased by $66.7 million (13.2 percent).

- Tax revenue increased by $19.4 million from last year, due primarily to increased property taxes resulting from related taxable values. Tax revenues have increased $42.9 million (14.2 percent) since FY2013 primarily due to increased property taxes.

- Intergovernmental revenues were up by $2.5 million (3.8 percent). The increase was due mostly to increases in state shared revenues from the revenue sharing trust fund and sales taxes due to continued economic improvement. This revenue source was also up by $7.1 million (11.4 percent) since FY2013.

- Charges for services were up by $0.8 million over the prior fiscal year attributable to increases in law enforcement service charges and zoning fees and $3.8 million (9.5 percent) since FY2013.
The General Fund is used to pay the regular operating and administrative expenditures not accounted for in other funds. General fund expenditures rose by $28.2 million (6.0 percent) in FY2015. From FY2013 to FY2015, general fund expenditures increased $39.4 million (8.7 percent). The following expenditures for the departments are paid from the General Fund (including transfers of funds):

**GENERAL GOVERNMENT**
- Board of County Commissioners, County Administrator, Public Defender, State Attorney, County Attorney, Court Technology, Court Related Programs, Information Services, Communications, Office of Management and Budget, Real Estate and Facility Management, Law Libraries, Telecommunications, Planning, Developmental Review Services, Purchasing, Building Design Division

**PUBLIC SAFETY**
- Medical Examiner, Emergency Communications (911), Fire Operations, Justice and Consumer Services

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**
- County Extension, Conservation & Resource Management, Environmental Management, Air Quality, Coastal and Navigation Management

**TRANSPORTATION**
- Public Works, Engineering, Transportation Planning, Structures Division, Civil Site Division, Surface Water Management, Construction Administration and Inspection and Survey Division

**ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT**
- Veteran’s Services, Community Development Programs, Community Housing Trust Fund, Neighborhood Programs, Economic Development and Human Rights

**HUMAN SERVICES**
- Social Services, Animal Services, State Mandates-Medicaid, Community Funded Programs, Social Work and Support Units, Outreach Units and Mosquito Control

**CULTURE AND RECREATION**
- Parks and Recreation, Libraries, Museums, Cultural Affairs, Horticultural Operations and the Florida Botanical Gardens

**TRANSFERS OUT**
- Appropriated fees to fund Constitutional Officer budgets and other funds
- Financial support to other funds
Enterprise fund or business-type activities offer goods and services to the citizens of the county and are intended to be self-supporting. In FY2015, revenues in business-type activities increased $15.3 million (5.6 percent) and expenses were up by $6.3 million or 2.5 percent. From FY2013 to FY2015, revenues increased $33.1 million (12.9 percent) and expenses increased $16.2 million (7.0 percent). The following charts reflect the enterprise fund revenues and expenses for the last three years.
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 $1.2 million (1.3 percent).
- Charges for services to retail and wholesale customers were down by $2.2 million or 2.5 percent due primarily to a reduction in revenue of approximately $2.8 million as a result of the City of Clearwater developing their own water resources, offset in part by additional revenue of $0.8 million stemming from a $1.00 per month increase in retail water rates.
- Operating expenses of the Water System decreased by $2.5 million (2.9 percent) from last year due to a reduction in the costs of water purchases from Tampa Bay Water of $1.6 million.

**SEWER SYSTEM**
- During FY2015, total program revenues increased by $4.3 million (6.0 percent).
- Charges for services to customers increased by $3.3 million (4.8 percent). This was attributable to a retail sewer rate increase of 6 percent, wholesale rate increase of 9 percent and various increases in reclaimed water rates.
- Annual operating expenses increased by $1.9 million (3.4 percent) due to increases in the cost of operating the facilities and net pension expense.
- The decision was made during the year to abandon the hypochlorite generation sewer project due to technological changes and life cycle cost considerations resulting in a loss of $1.2 million.

**SOLID WASTE SYSTEM**
- Total program revenues of the solid waste system increased by $0.7 million (0.8 percent) over last year.
- Charges for services increased $0.3 million (0.3 percent) due to an increase in tipping fees due to additional waste being processed for electrical sales.
- Operating expenses for the system were up by $6.5 million (7.7 percent) from the prior year. This increase in operating expenses was primarily due to an approximate $6.1 million increase in expense for the operation of the waste to energy plant resulting from a renegotiated contract.
- Management made the decision to demolish the lime softening system used in solid waste operations, replacing it with a more efficient process, resulting in a loss of $1.5 million.

**ST. PETERSBURG/CLEARWATER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**
- Total program revenues for the Airport increased by $11.4 million (67.5 percent) over the prior year.
- Charges for services were up by $1.8 million (16.1 percent) over the prior year.
- Capital contributions were up by $9.6 million (161.4 percent) due to an increase in federal and state grants.
- Operating expenses increased by $1.1 million (8.1 percent) due to an increase in personal services, contractual services, utility services, supplies and depreciation expense.
The Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller, through the Finance Division, conducts all investment activity of the Board of County Commissioners in accordance with Section 218.415, Florida Statutes, Local Government Investment Policies, as well as the investment ordinance adopted by the Board (Pinellas County Code, Investment of Surplus Public Funds, Section 2-144) and Board Resolution 10-2 adopting investment policies. The investment policy and the ordinance can be found at:

http://www.pinellasclerk.org/aspInclude2/ASPInclude.asp?pageName=investmentreports.htm

The Board’s investment policy applies to all funds in excess of those required to meet current expenses for the Board of County Commissioners. The Association of Public Treasurers of the United States and Canada (APT US&C) awarded Pinellas County in July 2013 with the Certification of Excellence for its investment policy for the second time. This certification should be renewed every three years. Receiving this certification denotes the county has a sound investment policy founded upon professional standards to assist in ensuring prudent management of public funds.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INVESTMENTS (dollars in thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasury Securities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Agency Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Funds Depository Accounts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Government Investment Pools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash Pools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL CASH AND INVESTMENTS</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pinellas County’s investment in capital assets for governmental and business-type activities is $3.3 billion, net of accumulated depreciation. This includes land, buildings, improvements, equipment, road, bridges, drainage systems, intangible assets and construction in progress. The total increase in capital assets was 0.7 percent over the prior year (0.4 percent increase governmental activities and 1.1 percent increase in business-type activities).
Pinellas County issues bonds in order to fund major capital projects or purchases. A major liability of the county is the amount of outstanding bonds. In recent years the county has been successful in reducing its debt. The county’s total bonds outstanding as of September 30, 2015, were approximately $162 million.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUE DATE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>ORIGINAL ISSUED AMOUNT</th>
<th>AMOUNT OUTSTANDING AT YEAR END</th>
<th>CURRENT MATURITIES¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2003</td>
<td>Sewer Revenue Bonds, Series 2003</td>
<td>$ 86,580</td>
<td>$ 5,215</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2006</td>
<td>Sewer Revenue Refunding Bonds, Series 2006</td>
<td>25,205</td>
<td>17,455</td>
<td>1,440</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2008</td>
<td>Sewer Revenue Bonds, Series 2008A</td>
<td>42,005</td>
<td>39,910</td>
<td>405</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2008</td>
<td>Sewer Revenue Refunding Bonds, Series 2008 B-1</td>
<td>32,700</td>
<td>32,280</td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2011</td>
<td>Sewer Revenue Refunding Bonds, Series 2011</td>
<td>20,870</td>
<td>10,430</td>
<td>3,410</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2012</td>
<td>Sewer Revenue Refunding Bonds, Series 2012</td>
<td>59,510</td>
<td>57,160</td>
<td>2,390</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**  
$ 266,870 $ 162,450 $ 7,730

The county’s bonds all have favorable underlying ratings from the following bonds rating agencies:
- 2006 and 2012 rated by Fitch-AA.

¹ Current maturities represent the amount of debt required to be paid during the next fiscal year.
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Pinellas County’s – “Doing Things for You” mobile app gained top honors for innovation in 2015 from the Public Technology Institute (PTI) (www.pti.org). The new app was recognized with the 2015 PTI Solutions Award. This app allows citizens to report issues in the community on their mobile device with the swipe of a finger, a simple solution that helps the county quickly receive and respond to service requests, allowing the county, municipalities and the Florida Department of Transportation to identify and address everything from potholes to flooding.

Pinellas County has also been designated as a 2015-2017 Citizen-Engaged Community by PTI acknowledging our impressive accomplishments through innovative processes for citizen participation in local government. The county was also awarded with the Tech Savvy designation which recognizes governments who meet the criterion developed by PTI that represent a “culture” of excellence through technology governance and practices as well as highlight enterprise-wide technology policy and program achievements.

The Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller’s Office continued to promote its Spending in the Sunshine financial transparency website. The website goes beyond state standards and actually surpasses the level of transparency many governmental offices offer, centered on the public’s right to open government. With this site, expenditure information is just a click away on the Clerk’s webpage (www.mypinellasclerk.org) through a tab titled “Spending in the Sunshine.” The National Association of Counties (NACo) chose the Spending in the Sunshine website, created by the Pinellas County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller office, as a recipient of the 2014 Achievement Award in the category of Civic Education and Public Information.

The North County Branch of the Pinellas County Clerk’s office received a high honor from the U.S. Department of State Miami Passport Agency. An Acceptance Facility Oversight Program compliance visit was conducted and the branch earned a perfect score. The certificate honors exemplary service to the community and the U.S. Department of State, Passport Services.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The new Public Safety Complex consolidated multiple agencies and saves taxpayers approximately $300,000 while providing Category 5 hurricane-hardened facilities for centralized 9-1-1 communications, Fire and Emergency Medical Services dispatch, Sheriff’s administration and fleet management, Emergency Management and the Emergency Operations Center. The Regional 9-1-1 Center answers close to 900,000 calls each year with more than 500,000 of them being 9-1-1 calls. Current statistics show more than 90 percent of 9-1-1 calls are answered within 10 seconds.
Emergency Medical Services was one of four EMS systems in Florida to be awarded a 2015 Mission: Lifeline EMS Gold Level Recognition Award from the American Heart Association. The award recognizes the EMS team for implementing quality improvement measures to rapidly identify, treat and transport heart attack patients.

The Emergency Management Department developed the Storm Surge Protector web application to allow citizens to easily visualize the deadly effects of storm surge. The app was developed to drive home the message that the greatest danger to people during a hurricane is not wind, but the onrushing waters of storm surge, reinforcing the need to evacuate when an order is given. The app won the Governor’s Hurricane Conference 2015 Innovation Award.

**ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT**

The Tampa Bay area continues to lead the state in job creation, adding 41,400 jobs last year and boasting an unemployment rate of 4.4 percent beating the national unemployment rate of 5.0 percent. Economic Development partnered with Tampa-Hillsborough Economic Development Corporation to create a strong regional approach for local businesses seeking to export their products and services and create new jobs.

The county is dedicated to developing its workforce through recruitment and retention of a diverse and talented pool of employees and by expanding opportunities for workforce growth and development. The Board adopted a minimum pay threshold of $12.50 per hour for all full-time, permanent Board employees, which exceeds federal minimum wage standards. In support of the “Ban the Box” initiative, the county approved the elimination of the question regarding conviction history from employment applications, thereby giving all applicants an equal opportunity to compete.

The recently approved South St. Petersburg Redevelopment Plan will allow future property tax revenue to be set aside to tackle poverty and blight conditions, creating new economic vitality in this historically underserved area. The first Community Redevelopment Area in unincorporated Pinellas has also been established in Lealman.

On July 13, 2015, the Board approved a settlement agreement with British Petroleum and others for claims resulting from the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. $7.1 million from the $9.6 million settlement, after attorney fees was deposited into the General Fund pending future Board decisions on the use of these resources.

**TRANSPORTATION**

In June 2015, St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport (Airport) was awarded $5.745 million in Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grant funds that will be used towards the demolition, removal and replacement of the existing pavement surfaces used to park commercial aircrafts. Through the efforts of Economic Development, the county was awarded a $250,000 Defense Infrastructure Grant from the State to be used for airfield improvements to the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater at the Airport.
The Airport realized a 23 percent increase in passenger volume from 2013, the second highest in its history, with a total of 1.25 million passengers in 2014. This trend continued into 2015 and the Airport is on path to set an all-time record for passenger volume. Allegiant Airlines continues to be the Airport’s largest airline. Allegiant now flies non-stop from the Airport to over 40 destinations.

HUMAN SERVICES

Ground was broken for construction of the new Bayside Health Clinic in Clearwater. The Clinic will provide health and dental services to an estimated 1,200 citizens. The Florida Department of Health, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and our Human Services Department partnered with the Sheriff’s Office to set up a temporary clinic at Safe Harbor which will transition to the new building. The clinic will serve as a critical health access point for area homeless.

The Board approved the Adult Emergency Financial Assistance Pilot Program with Human Services and 211 Tampa Bay Cares Incorporated to help those in need of emergency financial help (i.e. rent, utilities, minor car repair, etc.). The program, focused on individuals without minor children, is intended to help those in need and avoid homelessness and other catastrophic outcomes.

The county was awarded federal funding and state low income pool funds for the Mobile Medical Unit program, a medical office on wheels providing free basic health care for homeless residents.

The county was again awarded federal funding for Affordable Care Act navigators who help our citizens gain access healthcare. Navigators are located throughout the county to provide enrollment assistance to uninsured and/or underinsured residents into the Federal Marketplace. By assisting residents in the enrollment process, the county is pro-actively working to reduce the number of uninsured residents using hospital emergency rooms.
HUMAN SERVICES

Three initiatives will receive additional funding ($1.2M) via Human Services to contribute to more efficient and effective behavioral health outcomes. The SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) program will be expanded in coordination with the Public Defender and St. Vincent de Paul.

TRANSPORTATION

The county’s partnership with the Florida Department of Transportation is anticipated to yield important new and improved transit options, including the 118th Avenue Expressway project scheduled to commence this fiscal year.

Two local option taxes imposed by the Board expire on December 31, 2017. A one cent levy (referred to by statute as the “Ninth Cent”) that began January 2007, is dedicated to the installation, operation, and maintenance of the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). The other local levy, the Six Cent Local Option Fuel Tax (LOFT) is shared by interlocal agreement between the county and all municipalities within Pinellas County. The county’s share of collections is 60.0% of total receipts and the municipalities receive portions of the remaining 40.0%. An initiative is currently underway to extend both taxes for an additional ten years.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The Fort De Soto Park recirculation project aimed at estuary habitat restoration and bay water quality improvements is scheduled to begin. Funding allocations for the $1.5 million project include Penny funds as part of the Capital Improvement Program along with grant revenue from the Southwest Florida Water Management District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Tampa Bay Environmental Restoration Fund.

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The county established a land assembly program to stimulate redevelopment and increase affordable housing construction. The Housing Finance Authority will be issuing a $6 million funding availability announcement seeking eligible projects and housing development partners. The program is being provided by use of the Penny for Pinellas funds. The Penny for Pinellas is a 1 percent sales tax which is dedicated to capital improvement projects in Pinellas County, such as facilities, stormwater improvements, roads, bridges, public safety, and parks.
In anticipation of receipt of funds through the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund under the Federal Restore Act, the county has requested and received ideas and proposals for projects within the county and/or its adjacent bay, coastal and Gulf waters that will benefit the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem. The federal funding stems from Clean Water Act civil fines and penalties related to the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. This funding allocation, known as the Direct Component fund, will be used to restore the environment and economy of the Gulf Coasts above and beyond the environmental and economic impacts associated with the oil spill. On October 1, 2015, the county submitted its Multiyear Implementation Plan (MYIP) to the U.S. Treasury for their review. It’s anticipated that project grant agreements will be in place and projects can begin in 2016.

Photo courtesy of Pinellas County Economic Development

Pinellas County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To obtain accessible formats of this document, please contact the Finance Division at (727) 464-8300.
How To Contact Pinellas County

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.
Citizens’ Guide

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This Citizens’ Guide to County Finances was prepared by the Finance Division, the Clerk’s Print Shop, the Clerk’s Communications Coordinator and the Board of County Commissioners Communications Department.