Flagler welcomes Slovenian EMS

Flagler County welcomed four members of the Slovenska Bistrica Rescue Service. Flagler County Fire Rescue Chief Don Petito presented Matjaz Juhart, Tadej Lunder, Alen Markus and Iztok Skof with small tokens of appreciation from the county including coveted “challenge coins” that on one side bear the Fire Rescue seal and on the other side Saint Florian and the words “protect us.”

The Slovenians made the trip to learn how the emergency medical system works in the United States, but stole the show on Thursday during a meet-and-greet when they aired a short video produced by Markus about their job entails back home.

Lunder provided a narrative. Their rescue service unit has 19 members that serve 38,000 citizens over 144 square miles not far from Austria. They have answered 9,100 calls over the past 10 years, helping about 150,000 patients.

“We can communicate with our hospital in front, before we come,” Lunder said. Commissioner George Hanns asked several questions about their training.

“They have three years of training for what the U.S. does in one year,” Petito clarified.

Lunder, who has worked in emergency medical services for 13 years, said the work “is pretty much the same” in both countries with the exception of the doctor at the scene.

“We can learn a lot, but they can learn as much from us,” Lunder said. “We are really enjoying (our trip) and appreciate all the things the chief is doing for us.”

The Slovenians were here through Sunday training with Flagler County paramedics.
CARVER AUCTION breaks donation record

The George Washington Carver Foundation’s online auction topped a four-year donation record, and money is still coming in.

Winners spent $7,315 on more than 60 items in a bidding war that went down to the wire with a couple of donations negotiated in the 11th hour.

“We’re still working on some other donations, so that number may go higher,” said County Commissioner Barbara Revels. “Two bidders thought they had won the Hammock Beach Resort package because it went right to the end. The resort provided us with another package so they both got one.”

Revels is a member of the George Washington Carver Foundation and was part of a team instrumental in bringing the center up to sustainable level, saving the center from an uncertain fate. The Carver Center is a recreational facility that also offers tutoring, after school study, internet access and also serves the community with GED classes, employment counseling and other services.

Cheryl Massaro, director of both the Youth Center at Flagler Palm Coast High School and the Carver Center, said there is a growing group of supporters who participate in the auction.

“People are starting to look for our auction,” Massaro said. “We’ve raised more money this year than we have in the past. It will help us to keep the facility in good working order and for the continued development of the Carver Center.”

The center is packed on Saturdays with 300 basketball players bringing their A game. Weekdays some 15 to 20 students regularly participate in the Road to Success program to earn their GEDs and job training.

“What more than 40 of our participants now either have jobs or are in college,” Massaro said. “It underscores the need to expand the building.”

Joann B. King Park improvements ready for the start of school year

Bathrooms, landscaping, lighting, sod, additional parking and miles of sidewalks and connections between Bunnell Elementary and the Joann B. King Park will be ready by the start of next school year.

Construction of the $2.5 million project is well underway and will make the park more accessible to area residents and students.

“These improvements will make things much safer for the children,” said Faith Alkhatib, county engineer.

Flagler County entered into a joint participation agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation on behalf of the City of Bunnell to oversee the grant and project construction.

The work includes building a 5-foot sidewalk around Bunnell Elementary that begins at the school and runs parallel with Howe Street to connect it to State Road 100 and to Joann B. King Park.

“We piped the ditch for the sidewalk,” Alkhatib said. “It is better for the students who are walking not to have the ditch there.”

In addition to the sidewalk, there will be an elevated boardwalk over a low, wet area, as well as a bridge to connect Bunnell Elementary to the Clegg Property.

The entire park will be stabilized and sodded, making it ready for ball fields should Bunnell want to further expand amenities in the future.

“We are happy to share our expertise and knowledge with our neighbors when they ask us,” County Administrator Craig Coffey said.

The project is part of Flagler County’s strategic plan to support the desired quality of life and vision for the future.

“I love working on this project because it’s for the kids,” Alkhatib said.

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The Flagler County Board of County Commissioners
and the Veterans Advisory Council

Invite you to attend a Memorial Day Ceremony starting at 10 a.m., Monday, May 25

The ceremony will take place at the Flagler County Government Services Building
1769 East Moody Boulevard (State Road 100 East)
Bunnell, Florida

The ceremony will feature Col. Jack Howell, USMC retired, as the guest speaker. Howell is an aviator who graduated from the Top Gun school, the Naval War College and the Marine Corps Command and Staff College. He taught Marine Corps Junior ROTC programs in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Florida. He teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses in criminal justice with a specialty of terrorism.

Additionally, he is the president and CEO of Teens-in-Flight, which provides flight training and aviation maintenance scholarships to those teens who have lost a parent or sibling in the Global War on Terrorism, or is the teen or sibling of a parent who is disabled after being wounded in action.

Besides placing a memorial wreath at the Veterans Monument in front of the Government Services Building, Golden Sands, the local chapter of the Girl Scouts of America will place a Daisy Wreath at the monument. A Flagler Palm Coast High School student will sing the national anthem and Circuit Court Judge Raul Zambrano will play taps.

The Memorial Day event is sponsored by the Flagler County Commission and the Flagler County Veterans Advisory Council. Veterans groups to participate include: American Legion Post 115, Amvets Post 113, DAV Chapter 86, Italian American War Veterans Post 7, Jewish War Veterans Post 300, Marine Corps League 876, Military Officers Association of America, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Flagler County Veterans Service Office, VFW Post 8696, and the Knights of Columbus 2264 Color Corps.
We Are Flagler County!

Caryn Prather left her corporate job with ITT 16 years ago to become a paramedic for Flagler County.

She doesn’t regret that decision. “It’s different every day and it’s fun,” Caryn said. “It’s such a great feeling when you do something for someone.”

Flagler County paramedics are unlike any others.

“Our paramedics are the most comforting and caring people in the world,” Caryn said. “Sure we treat medical issues, but sometimes our patients are lonely too. We let them know we care and talk with them all the way to the hospital.”

Caryn was presented with an award Thursday by the Sons of the American Revolution, Flagler Chapter. She received the Emergency Medical Services Commendation Medal.

Caryn was awarded the medal for performing an act or service beyond that normally expected, said David John Kelsey Sr., past president.

“Every year we give an award for public service,” he said. “It’s especially fitting to do it now because it is Public Service Recognition Week.”

Caryn is also a member of Flagler County’s award-winning competitive paramedic team that has competed against teams from Austria, Belgium, Britain, Germany, Hungary, The Netherlands, Poland, Romania and the Czech Republic.

$2 million John Anderson project half done

Flagler County Road and Bridge crews are about halfway finished with a $2 million road widening and resurfacing project to accommodate bike lanes along John Anderson Highway.

Work began in March and includes adding five feet to each side of the roadway, widening the road base along the east side of the roadway first and then the west side before resurfacing and restriping the entire roadway. There will also be improvements to the road surface where it connects into driveways.

A Florida Department of Transportation grant will cover $1.74 million of the project.

“Because we are doing most of the work in house, we might not have to pay anything out of pocket,” Road and Bridge Manager Bob Atack said. “We are doing all the work except for the asphalt and striping work.”

Halifax Paving was awarded the $1.05 million contract for the asphalt paving and striping.

Atack’s goal is to keep the county’s portion of the work within the $690,000 difference and the total FDOT grant amount.

TV, radio, newspaper, magazines — Flagler County making news for the good things we do