



# THE MAYFIELD MINUTE

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### Vero Beach Office:

1053 20th Place  
Vero Beach, FL 32960  
(772) 778-5077

### Tallahassee Office:

317 House Office Building  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
(850) 488-0952

### Toll Free Numbers:

Phone — (866) 857-7289  
Fax — (888) 544-0393



Florida's Old and New Capitols

With the 2009 Legislative Session behind us, we are starting to see the effects of the legislation that was passed. In this issue, I will try to keep you updated on the actual effects of legislation. As well as, what we are working on in the interim in Tallahassee.

This issue will also continue to keep you informed of the developments and major activities happening in our backyard.

*-Rep. Debbie Mayfield*

## SEBASTIAN RIVER DREDGING PROJECT

I am please to announce that the St. Johns Water Management District recently completed the Sebastian River Dredging Project. Actual dredging of the Sebastian River began in July 2006 and dredging was completed in August 2009.

The recently completed dredging resulted in the removal of approximately 2.0 million cubic yards of sediment from the Sebastian River. This is equivalent to approximately 111,000 dump truck loads. The cost for the dredging project was approximately \$24.9 million, which included land acquisition, design and permitting, spoil disposal site construction, and dredging. Funding for the project came from a combination of Legislative appropriations, FIND grants and District ad valorem funds.

The Sebastian River dredging project was a highly successful project, which will result in significant reductions in sediment loading to the Indian River Lagoon, improved water quality in the Lagoon and the Sebastian River, improved navigation in the Lagoon and the Sebastian River, and continued improvement to seagrasses in the Lagoon.

"We would like to express our thanks to former Senator Ken Pruitt, and former Rep. Charlie Sembler. The late Rep. Stan Mayfield completed the legislative support and truly did the heavy lifting to bring this project to reality." said Michael Slayton with St. Johns River Water Management District.



The late Rep. Stan Mayfield supporting the St. Sebastian River Muck Removal Project in 2007.

### 2009 Budget Summary:

- Increased per-student funding for our K-12 schools to \$6873
- Worked to stimulate economic recovery with \$30 million for first-time Homebuyers
- Protected services and provider rates for Florida's developmentally disabled
- Maintained our commitment to restoring the Everglades with continued funding
- Invested in the future of Florida's economy by increasing funding for state universities
- Provided \$13.5 million in the Quick Action Closing Fund to attract new companies to Florida
- Prioritized public safety by protecting funding for vital probation and security officers who work with offenders



## FORT PIERCE MARINA

For those of us living in the Treasure Coast area, the destruction of the Fort Pierce City Marina during the 2004 hurricanes is one of those events that will never be forgotten. The wreckage strewn across the shoreline made national headlines, and the City's decades-long effort to revitalize the downtown public waterfront area suffered an enormous set-back.

The City of Fort Pierce has worked for 5 years and invested over \$1,500,000 to create a project that will protect the marina in a manner that would enhance and not detract from its overall goal of providing a viable public waterfront. In addition, this project will create biodiversity and provide substantial environmental benefits such as enhancing the surrounding mangroves and oyster beds in the Indian River Lagoon.

The City's project will restore the Marina back to its original capacity, allowing the full range of activities, from transient daily rentals to national-scale fishing tournaments, to resume. These primary and secondary economic benefits have been estimated at \$8.5 million annually to the local economy, which couldn't come at a better time.

On August 11, 2009, the Florida Cabinet approved DEP's request to grant the City of Fort Pierce the permit to start the rebuilding of the City Marina. The City's next obstacle is the U.S. Army Corps and I will work with the city to see this project through to the end.



Rep. Mayfield on a State Lands Tour

## FREE STATE PARK ADMISSION

September 2009 marks the third year that Governor Crist has proclaimed September as Florida State Parks Literacy Month.

Florida's state parks are offering visitors free admission from Friday, September 11 through Sunday, September 13 to any of their 160 state parks if they bring a library card, a book checked out from a library or donate a new or gently used family-friendly book. In addition, many state parks will host special events to encourage participation, varying from read-a-thons and book reading with local celebrities to book signings and storytelling. Visit [www.FloridaStateParks.org](http://www.FloridaStateParks.org) or call 850-245-2157 to find events near you.

For more detailed information on legislative issues, please check out the Florida Legislature's website!

[www.myfloridahouse.gov](http://www.myfloridahouse.gov)

If you have any issues, questions, or concerns, please feel free to contact our district secretary, **Sandi Harpring**, at (772) 778-5077 or toll-free at (866) 957-7289.



## NEW COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Speaker Larry Cretul recently announced some changes to the committee structure and moved members around to create more of an apprenticeship like environment for the newest members.

Rep. Debbie Mayfield was named the Vice-Chairman of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Committee. Her other committee assignments will include House General Government Policy Council, House Natural Resources Appropriations Committee, and the House Governmental Affairs Policy. Being on these committees, Rep. Mayfield will continue her work on issues such as energy, retirement and agriculture. Rep. Mayfield was also named as one of the four Deputy Whips that will assist the Majority Office with their legislative agenda.

Another major change in the committee structure is the change in the House Appropriations Councils. Chairman David Rivera will chair both councils to allow for a more cohesive budgetary process with the Senate.

## PROTECTING FLORIDA HOMEOWNERS

It is vital that we use every opportunity available to provide fairness and relief to Florida taxpayers, particularly during difficult economic times. Keeping Florida a low-tax, low-cost state is vital to our state's prosperity. This session, we passed several pieces of legislation aimed at providing additional property tax relief for Floridians.

The current property appraisal system unfairly favors government at the expense of taxpayers, and it needed to change. That's why I supported House Bill 521 sponsored by Rep. Lopez-Cantera, which maintains that a property appraiser's assessment is presumed to be correct, but only if they have shown that they have complied with applicable Florida Statute and professionally accepted practices. If that standard is met, then the burden will shift to the homeowner to show that the property in question exceeds the just value or that the assessment is based on an uneven standard to similar properties.

We also passed a ballot measure for November 2010 that will provide voters with the opportunity to limit the property tax increases on non-homestead property and provide first-time homestead property owners an additional exemption.

I believe that tax relief is not just about providing relief to families, seniors and businesses, it is about stimulating our economy. I feel strongly that we can speed up our economic recovery by keeping taxes and burdensome government regulations low, reducing state spending while maximizing the value of every tax dollar we collect and pursuing policies that encourage entrepreneurship and re-investment in our state.



Rep. Carlos Lopez-Cantera speaking on HB 521 during the 2009 Legislative Session.



## SPECIAL SESSION

There have recently been talks by the Governor about a possible Special Session in the next few months. President Jeff Atwater and Speaker Larry Cretul have yet to announce whether there will be a Special Session.

At this time, there has been no decision on what issues will possibly be considered. Although the Governor recently announced the signing of the compact with the Seminole Indian Tribe of Florida and this compact must be ratified by the Legislature.

I will continue to keep you apprised of this situation as it progresses.



Florida House of Representatives

For more detailed information on state agencies, please check out the official State of Florida website!  
[www.myflorida.com](http://www.myflorida.com)

## IRSC PUBLIC SAFETY TRAINING FACILITY

The Grand Opening of the Treasure Coast Public Safety Training Complex at Indian River State College on Sept. 11, opened the nation's most comprehensive, technologically advanced public safety resource to hundreds of Treasure Coast residents. The 50-acre, eight-building Complex has gained national and international attention for its proactive approach to disaster prevention and relief. The facility enables IRSC to combine criminal justice, fire science, forensics, emergency response and humanitarian aid education in one place for coordinated response to all types of emergencies.



Public Safety Trainers demonstrating an emergency situation in the Emergency Operations Center.

The Grand Opening featured high-tech demonstrations in the Regional Crime Lab, virtual reality training, SWAT teams, fire rescue and scenarios preparing officers to make quick decisions in real-life situations.

The proximity of the Complex at the IRSC Main Campus in Fort Pierce enables local agencies to save money on continuing education and to easily work together to fine tune inter-agency response to hurricanes and other disasters. Special workshops attract thousands of officers from around the country who support economic development by utilizing Treasure Coast facilities.

"I am very proud of the new facility at IRSC and I believe that our community as well as the nation will benefit from the experiences and training that our public safety personnel will gain from this facility. Thank you to Dr. Ed Massey and all of the donors who made this facility a reality," said Rep. Debbie Mayfield.

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