



U P D A T E

St. Lucie County

March 15, 2009

**A Monthly Update
of Current Events
and Happenings
within St. Lucie
County**

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This update is published monthly by the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners' Public Information Office. Direct inquiries to Ja' Net Pentz, Executive Assistant St. Lucie County 2300 Virginia Avenue Fort Pierce, FL 34982 772.462.1453 pentzj@stlucieco.org

Board of County Commissioners Special Meetings & Workshops

- The Board of County Commissioners will hold a Special Informal Meeting on the Local Stimulus Plan Tuesday, March 17 at 10:00 a.m. in Conference Room #3, County Administration, 2300 Virginia Ave., Fort Pierce.
- The Board of County Commissioners and the City of Fort Pierce will hold a Joint Meeting on Monday, March 30 at 1:00 p.m. at the City of Fort Pierce Commission Chambers, 100 North US 1, Fort Pierce.

Burn Ban

St. Lucie County officials, in conjunction with the St. Lucie County Fire District and Florida Division of Forestry, have implemented a county-wide burn ban effective immediately. The burn ban applies to all non-permitted, outside burning and fireworks. Agricultural burning will be permitted on a case by case basis as authorized by the State Division of Forestry. The drought index for St. Lucie County is currently 672, out of 800. An index reading higher than 550 is considered extremely dry. As in previous years, the county will continue to monitor the situation on a daily basis and take additional steps as needed until the drought index is once again satisfactory.

Treasure Coast Connector

The Treasure Coast Connector now offers two new fixed routes in Port St. Lucie. The new fixed routes will run along Port St. Lucie/Gatlin Boulevard and Prima Vista/St. Lucie West Boulevard. Single-day passes, 10-ride ticket books and monthly passes are available with discount passes to seniors and those with qualified disabilities. Single rides range from .50 to \$1 with children under 5 riding for free. The Treasure Coast Connector is operated by the Council on Aging of St. Lucie, Inc., in partnership with St. Lucie County's Community Services Department. For more information about fixed routes or the ribbon cutting call (772) 464-8878 or visit www.treasurecoastconnector.com.

The Master Gardener Gardening Festival

The Master Gardener Spring into Gardening Festival will be held on Saturday, April 25 from 8-2 p.m. As well as plants for sale from our nursery, there will also be some local vendors selling their products too. We will have a fashion show at 11:30 a.m. and the Taste of the Tropics at 12:30 p.m. where you can sample fruits you may have never tried before! The sale will be held at the Extension office, 8400 Picos Road, Fort Pierce. Call (772) 462-1660 or <http://stlucie.ifas.ufl.edu> for additional information.

Zora Fest!

Zora Fest! will be Friday, Saturday and Sunday, April 3, 4 and 5 at Lincoln Park Academy and other venues. Hurston scholars will be on hand to discuss her writings and her life. Niece Lucy Hurston, a professor at Manchester Community College in Connecticut, will be on hand for the festival and a Sunday brunch at the Pelican Yacht Club on April 5, 2009. For additional information, contact the St. Lucie County Cultural Affairs at (772) 462-1767 or go online at <http://www.zorafest.org>

Oxbow Temporarily Closed for Renovations

The Oxbow Eco-Center will be closed until Friday, March 20 due to interior renovations. Renovations are being performed in preparation for a new watershed exhibit. Residents and visitors can still hike the trails from dawn to dusk daily, while the Center is closed. For more information call (772) 785-5833. The Oxbow is located at 5400 N.E. St. James Drive, Port St. Lucie (across from the Publix Shopping Center). For more information visit www.stlucieco.gov/erd/oxbow.

Oxbow Lecture: Sustainable Biofuels: What Can Florida's Marine Microbes Do For Us?

Attend the Oxbow Eco-Center's Saturday Wake-Up Call Lecture Series on March 21 at 11 a.m. and explore the exciting new field of 'Green' Biotech as Dr. Peter McCarthy of Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute talks about the power of marine microbes. Dr. McCarthy is currently researching the use of cold-water microbes as a way to produce alternative fuels that have the potential to power our future. Microbes belong to the family of single-celled organisms that include bacteria, algae, protozoa and fungi. Marine microbes can catalyze sugars, lipids and cellulose into biofuels. These tiny organisms have a higher photosynthetic efficiency than plants, and absorb more carbon than is emitted in producing and burning the biofuel. And growing algae can take less land than other options, because it can be grown vertically. But, in the past, even algae had their issues, requiring a large energy input. Dr. McCarthy is studying cold-water microbes, which could eliminate this large energy input. Dr. Peter McCarthy is associate director and head of Microbiology Division of Biomedical Marine Research at Florida Atlantic University's Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute. He received his doctorate in microbiology from the University of Kent at Canterbury, England. With more than 50 scientific publications, Dr. McCarthy is researching applications for marine invertebrates and microbes, including new therapies for diseases such as cancer. The Oxbow is located at 5400 N.E. St. James Drive, Port St. Lucie (across from the Publix Shopping Center). For more information call the staff at (772) 785-5833 or visit www.stlucieco.gov/erd/oxbow.

2009 Ag Tour

Tour research and educational entities located right here in St. Lucie County during St. Lucie County's Annual Ag Tour! Join us in recognizing "Agricultural Awareness Week" taking place March 30 – April 4 as the St. Lucie County Extension Advisory Council presents its annual Ag Tour on Friday, April 3. The public is invited to experience this educational event and discover research and educational advancements being made locally in today's agricultural industry. The tour begins 7:30 a.m. at the USDA Horticulture Research Station located at 2001 S. Rock Road in Fort Pierce. Visit your choice of eight locations, including: ARS/USDA Horticultural Laboratory, the UF/IFAS Quarantine Invasive Facility, the St. Lucie County UF/IFAS Extension Office, the USDA Research Field Operation, the St. Lucie County "Hurricane House," the UF/IFAS Indian River Research and Education Center, the UF/IFAS Aquaculture Facility and the 4-H/St. Lucie County School Board Zoological Education Farm. This year's event will be held on Friday, April 3 from 7:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., beginning at the USDA Horticulture Research Station. The USDA will be conducting an open house from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. There is no cost for either event. Transportation and lunch will be provided thanks to our sponsors. Casual attire is recommended, as we will be outdoors a large portion of the tour. Extension programs are open to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, or national origin. Participants with disabilities are asked to indicate any necessary accommodations ahead of time by calling Karen at (772) 462-1660 before Friday, March 20. Members of the media are encouraged to participate.

Basic Water Rescue Courses

St. Lucie County's aquatic program is offering several American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue Courses, starting March 22 at Ravenswood Pool. The four-hour American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue Course will provide participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to prevent, recognize and respond to aquatic emergencies. This course will also teach you how to protect yourself while assisting others. The certification meets the needed requirements for foster parents. However, it will not qualify you as a certified lifeguard.

The cost to participate is \$30 per person. The deadline to register is the Wednesday prior to the start of the class. Participants must be at least 9 years old and be comfortable in chest-deep water.

Classes are scheduled for:

- Sunday, March 22 from noon – 4 p.m. at Ravenswood Pool, 200 Ravenswood Lane, Port St. Lucie.
- Sunday, June 28 from noon – 4 p.m. at Paradise Park Pool, 2020 Juanita Ave., Fort Pierce.
- Sunday, Sept. 27 from noon – 4 p.m. at Ravenswood Pool, 200 Ravenswood Lane, Port St. Lucie.

For more information contact Lucia Berry at (772) 462-3093 or (772) 634-2773.

Chris Dzadovsky, District 1 • Doug Coward, District 2 • Paula A. Lewis, District 3
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