



# ST. MARYS HIGHLIGHT

A Newsletter for the City of St. Marys Employees

Volume 1, Issue 8

September 2008

**Special Points of**

**Interest**

- **Signature Community**
- **Pooch Plunge**
- **Storm Season 2008 "How to Prepare."**
- **Employee of the Month**

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## Manager's Corner



**Bobby Marr  
Public Works**

Have you ever had the feeling that no matter how hard you try, you just can't seem to make any headway? Has your workload, whether at work or home, ever seemed too large to handle? Have you ever had a project that was so large that you didn't even know where to start? Have you ever had the feeling that it doesn't matter how hard you work on something, nothing seems to change? Well, you are not alone! I would venture to bet that everyone has had these feelings at one time or other. However, sometimes all it takes is a little inspiration to get you going. I ran across the following story several years ago and it provides just that inspiration I need. I refer to it often and have passed it on to several friends.

**"One Person Can Make A Difference"**

One morning, just before dawn, a man woke early so he could watch the sunrise over the ocean. As he walked along the beach he came across a young girl who seemed to be doing something peculiar. She was picking up starfish and throwing them into the sea – one after another. He asked her what she was doing. "The tide washes up all these starfish and they can't get back by themselves," she said. "They will die in the sun if I don't throw them back into the water." The man looked up and down the beach at the thousands of stranded starfish. He couldn't help telling her, "But there are too many starfish to save before sunrise. Why bother? You won't make much of a difference." She paused for a moment, then picked up another starfish and threw it as far as her slender arm could manage. With a satisfied grin, she turned to the man and simply said, "I made a difference to that one."

Sometimes it takes the mind of a child to remind us that everything, including life, does not have to be as complicated as we make it out to be. We just need to back up and think for a moment before we let ourselves fall into the same old pattern of getting overwhelmed. While we may not be able to "save every starfish", that does not mean that we should not try.

## Tropical Storm Faye

Tropical Storm Faye made four Florida landfalls: Key West, Cape Romano, Melbourne, and Flagler Beach. In a seamless effort the St. Marys Fire Department, Police Department, Public Works and City Hall officials created a plan on August 21, 2008 in preparation for the storm that would arise from its final landfall path.

The brunt of the storm lasted for two days, and during that time the employees worked tirelessly to protect the City and its residents. The Task Force, comprised of the Fire Department, Police Department and Public Works, responded to over 50 calls from citizens. These calls ranged from down trees and power lines to high water. Roadways remained open ninety-five percent of the duration of the storm, because of these efforts. Public Works also reported responding to over twenty five work orders for various emergency issues. If it was not for the efforts of all personnel working together, the results for the City could have been worse. However, due to the hard work, the City is happy to report that it did not sustain major damage and all departments are back to normal operation.

## ? Of the Month Contest

The August edition featured a picture of a City Employee, during his childhood years. The picture was of the Assistant City Manager, Max Tinsley. We had four correct answers given in the following order, by Shavon Gibbs, Kim Dockery, Ernesto Herring and Nicole Goebel. Congratulations guys!

This month's question is who wrote this memo? "Due to how well the floors look, in both buildings, let's see how long we can keep them this way. It's great isn't it? Therefore, to keep them this way, we need to minimize the amount of time we walk on them. So stay off the floors as much as possible."

If you think you might know the answer, send your response to [lori.whitlow@tds.net](mailto:lori.whitlow@tds.net) or send them via interoffice mail to Lori at the City Manager's Office.



## Insurance Update from Human Resources

Once again, I would like to remind everyone that if you met any of your deductible and out of pocket expense in the GMA Blue-Cross plan, you will receive credit for those amounts with our new Blue Cross Blue Shield plan. In order to do this, you will need to provide a copy of your most recent Explanation of Benefits (EOB) to the new provider. Please feel free to bring your EOB to Connie or Donna and we will be happy to assist you with the process or answer any questions you may have. You can also access your insurance coverage and claims by signing up on the Blue Cross Blue Shield website: [www.bcbsga.com](http://www.bcbsga.com). Please remember to **DESTROY** your old cards!! Medical, pharmacy, dental and vision is covered by Blue Cross & Blue Shield. All other cards are no longer valid and should be destroyed.

## *Signature Community* Creating a Climate for Success

By early Fall 2005, nearly 60 communities had submitted applications for Department of Community Affairs' *Signature Community Program*. The applications were solid and well written. After numerous hours of evaluation by volunteers from the Association of County Commissioners, Georgia Municipal Association, DCA and other partners, five communities were selected for the inaugural class.

On Tuesday, July 22, 2008, local leaders and residents representing the inaugural Signature Community Program participants of the inaugural class to include Cities of Kingsland/ St. Marys/ Woodbine-Camden County and more traveled to the State Capitol to meet with Governor Sonny Perdue, DCA Commissioner Mike Beatty, DCA Deputy Commissioner Jim Finch, DCA Regional Services Director Winfred Owens, DCA Signature Program Coordinator Patrice Williams and several other community and government officials to celebrate their completion of the rigorous program.

## Employee Assistance Program

I would like to make sure employees are aware of the Employee Assistance Program, which is provided to all employees and their families.

### Your EAP Is...

**Confidential** -Confidentiality is assured for you and your family members. Your employer will not be informed of your participation. Information will only be released with your permission, or as required by law for child or elder abuse, or in a life-threatening situation.

**Voluntary**-Your participation in the EAP is always voluntary.

**Accessible**-The EAP staff is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for crisis calls, counseling and referral.

**Face to Face**-EAP services are provided by local counselors in the privacy of offsite offices.

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## Planning and History Corner Did You Know ?

- ◆ That in 1930 the mayor of St. Marys was J.F. Bailey, Jr.
- ◆ That in 1978 the fee for rezoning of a property to single family use was \$50. In 2008 it is \$125.
- ◆ That in 1978 the base fee for a building permit, for a structure with a value of \$500,000 was \$500, in 1982 the same permit fee was \$615 and in 2008 it is \$2000.
- ◆ That in 1978 the fee for a special use permit was \$50, and today it is \$675.

Four facts a month about the planning and history of St. Marys.



**Saturdays from  
9:00 AM to 1:00 PM  
206 Osborne  
Street  
(Tribune and Georgian  
Parking Lot )  
For more information  
[www.stmcmarket.wordpress.com](http://www.stmcmarket.wordpress.com)**

### Tip of the Day



O.C.G.A. § 40-6-43 (2008)

§ 40-6-43. When overtaking and passing on the right permitted

(a) The driver of a vehicle may overtake and pass upon the right of another vehicle only under the following conditions:

(1) When the vehicle overtaken is making or about to make a left turn; or

(2) Upon a street or highway with unobstructed pavement of sufficient width for two or more lanes of moving vehicles in the direction being traveled by the overtaking vehicle.

(b) If otherwise authorized, the driver of a vehicle may overtake and pass another vehicle upon the right only under conditions permitting such movement in safety. Such movement shall not be made by driving off the roadway.

### Pooch Plunge

The St. Marys Aquatic Center sponsors the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Pooch Plunge on Sunday, September 7 from 3:00 pm-5:30 pm. Admission is \$3.00 per person (dogs are free). Dogs and owners can swim and play in the kiddie pool area during these times. Average attendance is 50 dogs, so don't be shy! What better way for you to be able to spend the day with your best pal than to splash around with him or her. We hope to see you and your favorite pooch there! For more info, contact the St. Marys Aquatic Center at 673-8118.



### Storm Season 2008 "How to Prepare."

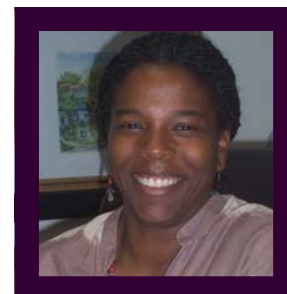
With the current hurricane season really starting to pick up, we as employees of the City and as citizens have to be ready. This means that we need to be prepared at both work and home. There are many things that we can do in advance and have ready to go, if a storm happens to be approaching our area. We hear everyone talking about getting their emergency kits together, but what items should we include? Drinking water, non-perishable foods, clothing, first aid kit, tools, sanitation supplies and medications. These are just a few of the items that FEMA suggests you put into your kit. You can get a more detailed list of suggested items by going to:

<http://www.fema.gov/plan/index.shtm>.

As employees we need to know what the plan of action will be. Your Department Head and Supervisors will advise you of what the schedules will be and so forth, but you need to make sure that you have given the Human Resources Department any updated contact information to have on file in advance of a storm approaching. This will insure that you can be notified of any updates of schedule changes or cancellations. Communication is always a key component. While we hope for no more storms in our area, let's be prepared and proactive.

### Employee of the Month

The City of St. Marys would like to congratulate Renee Coakley on being the Employee of the Month for the month of July, 2008. Her recent efforts have been focused on the Chairity Auction, which was a successful event. She is also constantly working with the Downtown Community Market and the DDA. Great Job Renee!!!





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If you have information for this newsletter, please contact Lori Whitlow, Executive Assistant to the City Manager, at 510-4041.

**Upcoming Events**

- **Experience Coastal Georgia Festival** in the Crooked River State Park, September 13, 2008
- **Starry Nights** (Howard Gilman Memorial Park) September 20, 2008
- **Rock Shrimp Festival** in Downtown St. Marys, October 4, 2008
- **Wounded Warriors Day** November 8, 2008 -Don't miss the billboard at Saturday Park on Hwy. 40 about this event. Do you know a wounded warrior? We are looking for the names of those injured physically or mentally while serving their country. Please provide their name to the City Clerk's office, so they can be honored at the 2nd Annual Wounded Warriors Day. You may reach the Clerk at 510-4039/4019.



**Hay Days...Coming Soon!**

**October 11<sup>th</sup> – November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008**

**Events:**

**Build A Scarecrow**, Saturday, October 11<sup>th</sup> 10–12 pm

**Scarecrow Stroll**, Tuesday, October 14<sup>th</sup> 5–7 pm

**Pumpkin Palooza**, Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup> 10–2 pm

For more information contact:  
912-882-8111



**Employee Assistance Program Continued**

**Professional**-All EAP counselors are qualified mental health professionals who have been extensively trained in problem assessment, treatment and referral.

**Cost Free**-EAP counseling is free to you and your family members. If a problem is assessed to need specialized or extended treatment, a referral will be made to a community resource for which you will be financially responsible. However, in most cases, part of the cost will be covered by your health insurance.

**You can access EAP 24 hours a day,  
7 days a week by calling:  
1.866.754-4560**

**Vision Statement**

The City of St. Marys vision is to create a community of excellence governed by the principles of responsibility, fiscal soundness, accessibility and service to the public, in an atmosphere rich in historic and cultural significance, while retaining its natural beauty, charm, resources, and unique appearance; a community that attracts and maintains active and supportive citizens, with an enhanced quality of life and economic opportunity for all.

**Mission Statement**

The mission of the City of St. Marys is to provide the most responsive and progressive public services, within the resources provided, so that our citizens can enjoy the best possible quality of life.