

THE



Issue 42.03



BULLETIN

March 2016

Free Copy

Champions of Residents' Rights Since 1975

The POA Website - www.poa4us.org

Villages Multi-Modal Paths and Roadways Users and Enforcement

CDDs 1 – 11 were developed as mixed-use retirement communities pursuant to County and State approved Development Orders (DOs). These DOs require that the Districts provide non-automotive, non-vehicular, multi-modal paths for bicycles, pedestrians, skaters and golf carts. The intent of the DOs is to provide a uniform system of multi-modal paths (MMPs) throughout the Districts as alternative transportation routes for residents to access The Villages' numerous golf courses and amenities.

In the summer of 2010, District Attorney Valerie Fuchs was asked to provide the Districts with a legal opinion as to whether or not there were other means of conveyances that could use the MMPs, since the DO's only specifically name bicycles, pedestrians, skaters and golf carts as legal users. She provided a legal analysis advising that it was her opinion that Segways, street legal golf carts and low speed vehicles (LSVs) were legal users of the MMPs, and that motorcycles and mopeds were not as they were both defined as vehicular.

(For the full legal opinion go to the District Government website, districtgov.org, scroll down and click on "Share the Path".)

However, Community Development Districts (CDDs) do not possess any law enforcement powers, and therefore have no authority to enforce speed limits and other restrictions.

When approached for assistance in speed control and other restrictions, Lt. Wolfe, of the Sumter County Sheriff's Department (SCSD), advised that its attorney had opined that the Districts' MMPs do not meet the statutory definitions of "streets", "highways" or "roads" and therefore the Department does not have jurisdiction to install or enforce any traffic control devices.

However, at a recent POA meeting, Lt. Siemer, the District Supervisor for the SCSD, advised the audience that, while they cannot issue speeding tickets on the MMPs, they can issue DUIs on the MMPs.

We understand that a possible solution to this enforcement dilemma is to seek a legisla-

tive change to Chapter 316 of the Florida Statutes to expand the traffic control and enforcement jurisdiction of local law enforcement agencies to extend to MMPs that are open to the public. That way the 20MPH speed limit on the MMPs could actually be enforced.

RULES ON THE MULTI-MODAL PATHS AND LAWS ON THE ROADWAYS

Lt. Siemer was our guest speaker at a recent POA meeting. He was asked to speak about pedestrian, bicycle and golf cart laws. A summary of his presentation follows:

(Continued on page 2)

'Tis The Time to Be Irish!

by Jim Buchhofer on behalf of the Residents Parade Committee



One of the really neat things about The Villages is that we have thousands of clubs to choose from for our personal enjoyment, enhancement and enrichment. Perhaps the most loved are those that wrap us up in our rich national heritages. We treasure our ancestry, be it Irish, German, Italian, etc.

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Tuesday, March 15, 2016
POA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Third Tuesday of the Month - 7PM
Laurel Manor Recreation Center

Update on New Tax Changes for the 2015 Tax Year
John Krier, District Coordinator of AARP TAX AIDE

Followed by Questions & Answers
Audio and Visual in Overflow Room
Donuts and Coffee For All After The Meeting
All Residents Welcome - Come and Join Us!

Multi-Modal Paths

(Continued from page 1)

He reminded us that all of these laws are enforceable on the roadways, but not all of them are enforceable on the MMPs. The MMPs are the private property paths that are not attached to the roadway.

The SCSD will enforce DUI laws on the MMPs. Note that you can get a DUI in any type of vehicle – golf carts and even bicycles. They can issue DUI's on the MMPs because the state law says that you cannot operate a vehicle while drinking alcohol or while intoxicated **anywhere** in the state of Florida, not just on the roadways, but on private property as well.

PEDESTRIANS: They **must use** the sidewalk when one is provided. If there is no sidewalk, they must walk on the left hand side of the road against traffic. They must move to single file when there is oncoming traffic. Pedestrians must cross a road at a right angle unless otherwise authorized by a traffic control device, and when crossing streets not at a crosswalk, they must yield to vehicles. Even if you are using a crosswalk, a pedestrian shall not suddenly leave a curb or other place of safety, walk or run into the path of a vehicle which is so close that it is impossible for a driver to yield.

BICYCLES: Bicycles always go with traffic. When you are driving or operating a vehicle (a car) on a roadway, and you are coming up to a bicycle that is in the same lane that you are in, and you want to pass that bicycle because they are going slower than the speed limit, you must give them at least three feet. That is just a safety rule for everyone. If there is a second lane, use that lane to pass. The law states the roads must be a standard width. (However, the roads in The Villages are a sub-standard width, a little bit narrower, so it **might**

appear that the bicycle riders are taking more width and straying from the far right lane.)

Bicycles can ride two abreast, side by side, as long as they are not impeding the flow of traffic. So, if the speed limit is 30MPH, and the bicyclists cannot maintain the 30MPH speed, they have to ride in single file. You cannot ride more than two abreast. If you are under the age of 16, you must wear a helmet. Lt. Siemer recommended that everyone wear a helmet.

Bicycles are required to stop at all stop signs, even if they are riding in a group. All bicyclists have to stop at a stop sign and can receive a traffic ticket if they do not. You cannot have the first person stop and then wave the rest of the group through - everyone has to stop. Again, remember, you can get a DUI on a bicycle too.

GOLF CARTS: Golf carts can only operate on roadways where the posted speed limit is 30MPH or less. LSVs and street legal golf carts can operate on roadways where the posted speed limit is 35MPH or less. Golf carts must use the MMPs where they are provided and they must ride on the far right-hand side edge of the roadway where they are not.

NOTE - for all of the 'golf cart mechanics' out there: **Golf carts cannot be capable** of exceeding 20MPH. People think that "as long as I'm only doing 20MPH on the roadways, it's ok if my cart can go faster". That is not what the state law says. The state law actually says your golf cart cannot have the capability of exceeding 20MPH. So don't think you can travel 20MPH on the roadways and then get on the golf cart path and go as fast as your cart will go. It is a misdemeanor resulting in a criminal citation if your golf cart can exceed 20MPH. The citation requires a mandatory court appearance, and it is very expensive. Fines can be up to \$500 and the judge can make you prove that the speed capability of the cart has

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POA

Mission Statement

The Property Owners' Association of The Villages is an independent organization devoted to our home ownership experience.

The Vision/Objective of the POA is to make The Villages an even better place in which to live, where Residents' Rights are respected, and local governments are responsive to the needs and interests of residents.

The POA serves Villagers through programs of education, research, analysis, representation, advocacy, and legislative action.

The POA also functions as a "watchdog" organization overseeing the actions of our Developer and our local governments.

Specific POA attention is focused on housing, community, neighborhood, and local government issues. Special emphasis is focused on the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC), our Community Development Districts (CDDs), the Florida Chapter 190 law that regulates CDD operations, and our Developer.

The POA has no ties or obligations to the Developer of The Villages which might compromise the POA position or its advocacy of Residents' Rights.

The POA, founded in 1975, is the original homeowners' organization in The Villages. Membership is open to all Villages residents. □

The Villages Residents' Bill of Rights

RESIDENTS have RIGHTS to:

1. Be treated in a respectful, fair, and responsive manner by the Developer and our local government officials.
2. Have decision making authority for important issues in our community.
3. Elect our top government officials and approve appointments of the top administrative officials in our community.
4. Approve major purchases of common property and the related debt obligations assumed by residents.
5. Have local governments that are free of any conflict of interest issues.
6. Be charged honest monthly amenity fees that are used only for the stated purposes.
7. Receive full disclosure when purchasing a home here in The Villages.
8. Receive an objective market appraisal for major purchases of common property.
9. Receive objective, unbiased, unslanted news reporting from local news sources.
10. Be informed beforehand by the Developer on any major change in our community. □

The POA Bulletin is published monthly by the Property Owners' Association of The Villages, Inc. Articles represent the opinion of the POA or the writer, and Letters to the Editor postings represent the opinions of the writers. Care is taken to ensure that facts reported herein are true and accurate to the best knowledge of the POA and are taken from reliable sources.

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**If You Appreciate the Efforts the POA Makes on Your Behalf, You Can Show Us Now!
Send in Your Membership Application Today!**

As stated in the POA mission statement, found on page 2, we exist and function as a "watch dog" for the residents of The Villages. Established in 1975, we are the original homeowners' association with no ties and/or affiliations to the Developer, local governments, or business interests. The POA strives to make The Villages an even better place in which to live, where Residents' Rights are respected and local government and the Developer are responsive to the needs and interests of everyone living in Florida's friendliest hometown.

We publish a monthly Bulletin delivered to the driveway of all homeowners, regardless of whether or not they are active POA members, (unless you contact us at 352-325-1540). We strive to keep each of you informed of facts about issues which may not have been clearly or fully presented in other media.

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**IF YOU READ THE BULLETIN,
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Paying a membership fee of \$10.00 per year is an investment in your future as you will be helping to keep the POA financially sound and your membership numbers will increase our "clout" if action needs to be taken.

The POA membership year runs from January 1 through December 31. POA members have access to discounts provided by our Discount Partners (See page 23). POA members who have provided us with an email address will receive our monthly POA Email News-

letter reminding them of the speaker and date of the upcoming monthly POA membership meeting, as well as Special Alerts about any important matter on a timelier basis than what our Monthly Bulletin can provide.

We are now accepting 2016 POA memberships (\$10 per household). Please use the form below. NOTE, WE DO NOT OFFER A LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP, but commencing with the 2016 membership year, we are offering residents the opportunity to join for one, two or three years, so as not to have to go through the renewal process every year. □

THE POA HAS YOUR BACK, DO YOU HAVE OURS?

POA 2016 AND BEYOND MEMBERSHIP & CONTRIBUTION FORM

Please complete each section and return to: The POA, P.O. Box 386, Oxford, FL 34484

New Member Renewal Number of People in Household: _____

PLEASE PRINT! or Use the ONLINE FORM found on our website POA4US.ORG

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NAME(S)(2) _____ (DIFFERENT LAST NAME)

ADDRESS _____

VILLAGE _____ VILLAGES ID# _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

(We respect your privacy. Your email address is for POA Official use ONLY)

- MEMBERSHIP DUES** (Please Select One):
- One year - 2016 - \$10 per/household
 - Two years - 2016/2017 - \$20 per/household
 - Three years - 2016/2017/2018 - \$30 per/household

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION IF DESIRED: Please accept my additional contribution to the POA in the following amount: \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT FOR DUES AND ANY CONTRIBUTIONS: \$ _____

- Enclosed is a Stamped, Self-Addressed Envelope, along with this form and my check. Please mail my Membership Card to me.
- Please hold my POA Membership Card for me to pick up at one of the monthly POA Meetings.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF THE POA

Multi-Modal Paths

(Continued from page 2)

been reduced to 20MPH max. The SCSD does enforce speeding and stop sign traffic violations on the roadways.

MAKING A TURN IN A GOLF CART ON A ROADWAY: Morse Boulevard, north of CR466, is a perfect example. Keep in mind, you might be right, you may have the right of way, but if you are traveling in a golf cart, you are not going to win against an automobile.

You are talking about something that weighs less than a 1000 pounds colliding with something that can weigh 3-5000 pounds. It is a good idea, when on roads like Morse Boulevard where you share the roadway with automobiles, to keep in mind that if you see a vehicle passing you with a right turn signal on, in order to protect yourself, slow down and yield to the vehicle.

While it is aggravating, and the automobile driver shouldn't turn in front of an oncoming golf cart. Rather than becoming a statistic, consider yielding to the automobile. Drive defensively. If you are going to make a left hand turn from Morse Boulevard (north of CR466), use your turn signals AND your arm signals as well, because a lot of the time your golf cart turn signal lights are covered up by golf towels, enclosures, etc.

Merge into the turn lane when it is safe to do so, **prior to your turn** and execute your

turn when the oncoming lanes are clear. Keep in mind, you are not only contending with a lane of traffic for vehicles, you are also contending with an oncoming golf cart lane.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALKS: This one comes up quite a bit. When you are driving an automobile and you see a stop sign ahead of you, and just before that stop sign there may or may not be a crosswalk marking in the roadway, you are required by State Statute to stop, allowing room for a crosswalk, even if there is no crosswalk marking. Drivers are subject to stop or yield to pedestrians already in a crosswalk.

Lt. Siemer concluded his presentation by stating that, "I have been in The Villages area for the past 10 years and I think this is a great place to be, but we all need to kind of get along a little bit better.

"I do notice that a lot of us will get mad at each other, blow horns, etc. I drive a car that has a Florida tag on it (not a yellow State tag). If I stop at a stop sign too long, the people behind me are blowing their horns at me. I just don't understand that. You guys are all retired, where are you going in such a hurry? We really need to just slow down a little bit, take a little extra time.

"Someone gave me a handbill a while ago - it says 'Look Both Ways Twice' and I think that's a good saying. I always look to the left, look to the right and look to the left again, just like we were all taught when we started driving. It takes a few extra seconds, but it keeps everyone safer, because you may miss something - you may miss that bicycle or that pedestrian or that golf cart. Unfortunately, in the

last 10 years, we've had a lot of people get seriously injured or killed here in The Villages. Most of it could have been avoided. We want you to enjoy your retirement, not end up in the hospital.

"Take your time, slow down a bit and when you wave to people, use all of your fingers. That's really all I have, if you get anything out of all of this, it's just about safety. We want everyone to be safe, enjoying your retirement. I'll take your questions now..."

Q1) I've been here 16 years. The biggest thing that irritates me is I live off of Morse and Hacienda South. I travel Morse a lot, whether it's the post office or Madero or wherever. When you're making a left hand turn, cars invariably go around your car into the golf cart path. I wish that you'd patrol a little more often. **A)** We have hit Morse Blvd. pretty hard. I pulled the stats not too long ago and we write at least 3 tickets a day on Morse (north of CR466), and that's not even when we are out trying to patrol, that's just on a day to day basis. We do know that every place is important. If anyone has a place of concern, please call us. We have a really interesting way to handle that...what we'll do is place a battery operated speed indicator piece of equipment that actually records speed and time of day. We download that information, print and evaluate the data, to determine the best time of day to have the deputies present in those areas to enforce traffic laws. Has anyone seen our motorcycle deputy or received a ticket from him? We send him to Morse Blvd. quite a bit.

(Continued on page 5)

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Multi-Modal Paths

(Continued from page 4)

Q2) Did you say bicycles can ride on roads with 30MPH speed limits or less? **A)** Bicycles can ride on any roadway, it doesn't matter what the speed limit. The example I gave is that they can ride two abreast as long as they can keep up with the speed of the traffic, otherwise they must ride in single file.

Q3) Our cart paths are designed for beauty, rather than for travel. If you look at the way they are done, they could have gone straight, but instead they weave and wind, especially those north of CR466. If there is a golf cart that is doing 15MPH, and a golf cart behind them doing 18MPH, it takes a long time to be able to pass and they really don't have a clear view on many of the cart paths. That really creates a danger. **A)** My solution is to slow down a little bit. There are statistics that came out a few years ago, showing that you are twice as likely to die in a car accident at 60 MPH, than you are at 45MPH. I don't know what the new statistics are now, but keep that in mind, a few miles an hour does make a difference on impact. Let's just relax a little bit.

Q4) We are new to The Villages and we are going to have guests. Can you give us a bit of information on how we can convince our younger guests that the golf cart is a vehicle. Can you talk about the times when the popula-

tion increases and the roadways are full? **A)** Actually there is a golf cart safety clinic every month that you may want to send them to. The law says you have to be a minimum of 14 years of age to operate a golf cart and you don't need a driver's license. I don't know about you, I don't have kids, but I can't imagine giving a 14 year old child the keys to my golf cart. We work some crashes where these kids flip carts and do some crazy stuff. I always ask grandma and grandpa, why did you give the kid the keys? There's not really an answer to that. The best answer I can give you is to educate them on the rules.

Q5) How do you treat Segways when young people show up. And, what level do they fit? Golf cart, bicycle? **A)** They cannot be on the roadways, so they have to be on the golf cart path.

Q6) I own a street legal golf cart. When I go up Morse Blvd, I do get the one finger wave, and I appreciate why they are doing that. I'd like to know if I can move over to the golf cart path on the roadways when I'm not able to maintain the speed of the automobiles I'm traveling with? **A)** The last time I was here, that was a discussion that we had and it took me a long time to get an answer. You have to remember that The Villages is a very unique place and there's no place in the country that is as large as this with as many golf carts, but the ruling from our supervisors is

that since a street legal cart is a registered vehicle, it is not supposed to be in those bicycle/golf cart lanes.

Q7) If you are in a car, and there is a golf cart merge, who has the right of way? We live in a golf cart community and the golf carts think they have the right of way, they pull out right in front of you. **A)** Those are two separate lanes, one is a golf cart lane, and the other is a vehicle lane. When you want to change lanes, before you can change lanes, it has to be safe to do so. When the golf cart lane comes to an end, and you are going 20MPH in the golf cart lane, you can't just pull out in front of a vehicle in the vehicle lane. Slow down and merge into the vehicle lane as you approach the merge signage.

Q8) I want some clarification. I am sure everyone here knows that people drive their golf carts on the streets with their turn signals

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Multi-Modal Paths

(Continued from page 5)

going forever and ever. When you come to a stop sign, a golf cart is supposed to stop and a car in the next lane is also supposed to stop. If the car is going to turn right and the golf cart has its right turn signal blinking, you may both turn right, because the lanes do not converge, but what if the golf cart is really going straight. Who is at fault if there is a collision? **A)** That is definitely a problem we have here. The blinker could have an effect on the outcome of who is at fault and it would be up to the deputy to make the decision depending upon the totality of factors. Remember, a traffic crash is a civil matter and in a civil case the judge could find both parties at fault for a crash.

Q9) I have a question about insurance for golf carts. What is the requirement? **A)** There is no statewide insurance requirement for golf carts. However, if you are a low speed vehicle, you must have car insurance on it. I think you would be pretty foolish not to have insurance on a golf cart, because if there is an acci-

dent and you are responsible, you could be liable.

Q10) More tickets need to be given out on El Camino...people recognize 5 miles over is acceptable, but they are going more than 10MPH because they think no one is going to do anything. **A)** I get all the quarterly reports from The Villages, including traffic crashes, speeding tickets, etc., and I do know that last quarter 1600 tickets were written in The Villages. You can be pulled over for going ANYTHING over the speed limit, so you can get rid of that 5MPH over concept.

Q11) We are new to The Villages, and while this may not relate to you, maybe someone knows an answer. I'm having a lot of difficulties with signage for the golf cart paths. They are either too far away from where I'm going or you see it after you needed to go through a tunnel. The tunnel says B16 and you don't know where in the world that is. How can I address that? **A)** The B16 is so that if you have an accident or an emergency, when you call 911 you can identify where you are. This signage issue comes up at district meetings all the time, the color, it's too high, it's too low, or whatever. They do try to make the signs as visible as they can.

Q12) Would there be some way that the company that sells the golf carts could adjust the nighttime driving headlights to some reasonable standard? **A)** I am not a golf cart expert, but I'm sure if you got with them they probably could. An audience member advised that the newer carts do have a means to adjust the headlights.

Q13) I was coming north from SR44 and

south of CR466A – I think you should be looking out for some of the construction trucks who have a lot of metal equipment hanging out of the back of them...one piece fell off. I tried to follow one of them into a Village, but there was another truck behind him and by the time I was able to get inside the gate, he was long gone. **A)** We actually do keep an eye on the construction crews and even the lawn workers. There is a law about securing a load, so if we see that, we do enforce it.

Q14) Is it legal to be talking on a cell phone while you are driving a golf cart? **A)** We have not yet adopted a law for cell phone usage in any vehicle. It is illegal to text, while you drive, so keep that in mind.

Q15) People do not know how to drive the roundabout circles. **A)** The best way to look at it is to consider that instead of a roundabout, there is an intersection. How would you drive through an intersection? If you are in the left hand lane, what can you do? You can go straight, you can go left or you can make a U-turn. We ask you not to change lanes within the roundabouts. We ask that you change lanes before you get to the roundabout. There are signs posted that tell you what you can do once you get inside the roundabout. One thing that I've had problems with for a number of years, especially as a road patrol deputy driving around up here, is that I have had a bunch of near misses where I've almost been creamed in the roundabouts. Lt. Wolfe taught me to use my turn signal once I'm inside the roundabout as it gives all the drivers around me an indication of what I'm going to do and it has saved me on a number of occasions. □

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Irish Parade

(Continued from page 1)

In our Villages, the task of putting together the wonderful parades which highlight these ancestries, falls to the Residents Parade Committee. Now in its 4th year, it opens this year's festivities with the **Gallic Gala**, the **St. Patrick's Day Parade**.

This annual "wearing of the green" draws thousands of Villagers out to Spanish Springs. They come decked out in their finest "greenery", replete with shamrocks and a **green beer**. A rollicking good time is always had by the marchers and watchers alike. It's a shared feeling of pride and excitement.

The Villages, like all of America, boasts a proud portion of **Irish** descendants. Nationwide there are some 35 million, and that's no blarney, LOL! Here, the banner of this heritage is carried proudly by the **Shamrock, Patrick, Claddagh and Celtic** clubs.

And, now, **St Patrick's Day** is upon us and it's time for the Irish to shine again. On **Thursday, March 17th at Spanish Spring, beginning at 3:30PM**, the clans shall gather to march and watch. Will you be one of those parading with pride or will you be street-side with your friends and family watching and cheering your friends and neighbors strutting down the street? Whether you are full-blooded

Irish, part Irish or Irish for the day, "get it together, me boy" and get on down to cheer them on.

There is one very important catch to all the above. Since this is a "residents" parade, it takes residents to pull it off. This great parade and the great community it represents needs your help. 100 worker elves are needed to volunteer to fill these 3 positions:

Parade Marshals: Some will wear an earpiece for the walkie-talkie and take direction from the head marshal while walking the parade route, and will use a flag to stop and start your parade group.

Crossing Area Volunteers: Will stand or sit at the assigned area along the parade route to keep pedestrians from crossing the parade route. Crossing group leader positions each crossing volunteer according to the parade map designations, and any chairs that have been moved from tables along the parade route must be put back in place.

Clean-up Volunteers: Meet at tents after the parade. Trash must be removed from the staging and parking areas. Help with consolidating parade items in the staging area. Help taking down the tents, tables, and chairs.

Please step up, volunteer to keep the residents parade tradition alive and support our shared heritage. To volunteer, email Sally at sallycanna@centurylink.net □

TWO MORE GOLF CART RELATED FATALITIES!!

We have had two more golf cart related fatalities in the last month. Like all of the other fatalities the golf cart occupants were not wearing a seat belt and were thrown/ejected from the cart at impact. In the latest crash the victims were doing everything right – they were not drinking, speeding, etc., but merely using the cart as a legal means of transportation, but they were not using seat belts.

Please note that there have been at least EIGHTEEN golf cart related FATALITIES in the Villages in the last eight years, and over three dozen golf cart users who had to be trauma alerted to a hospital with head injuries during the last four years.

Each month, starting with the February 2012 POA Bulletin and ending in April, 2014 (you can find all of them on the poa4us.org web page - click on "archived bulletins"), we have included a listing of all of the accidents (with as much description as we had available) that we were aware of, and identified that almost all of them involved either someone falling out of a cart, or being ejected from the cart onto the pavement. OUR MESSAGE IS THAT WE BELIEVE YOU MIGHT BE SAFER IF YOU USE A SEAT BELT, but the usage of seat belts in golf carts is not required by Florida Statutes so it is your choice.

**STAY ALERT! - BUCKLE UP!
STAY ALIVE!** □

VCDD Community Development District I Town Hall Meeting

The Village Community Development District No. 1 will host a Town Hall Meeting on Thursday, March 31, 2016 at 6PM in the La Hacienda Regional Rec Center. The Town Hall Meeting offers an opportunity to learn interesting facts about the District. Residents will be able to ask questions of the District Supervisors. For more information, please contact Jennifer McQueary, District Clerk, by email, jennifer.mcqueary@districtgov.org, or you can call her at 352-751-3939. □

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Visibility Issues on Multi-Modal Paths

We have received a number of inquiries, especially from our seasonal residents, as to what is being done about the **visibility issues on the Multi-Modal Paths (MMPs), during nighttime and inclement weather conditions.**

There was a time when ALL of the "Recreation Trails", (now called "Multi-Modal Paths"), north of CR466 were made of concrete and had reflective yellow centerline striping. However, when the Amenity Authority Committee, (AAC), using part of the \$40 million "Settlement Funds", reconstructed the major arterial MMPs, (such as those along Buena Vista and El Camino Real), and paved them with asphalt, the striping was not replaced because it was believed that the wider paths did not need striping. (Note: Some of the old concrete MMPs in District 1 neighborhoods, along the east side of Morse Blvd, and along the entry road into Glenview Country Club, still have faded yellow striping.)

When the visibility issue was first raised in 2013, the AAC offered to fund the installation and maintenance of reflective yellow centerline striping in CDDs 1-4. Safety and better

nighttime and inclement weather visibility were cited as the primary reasons. District 4 accepted the offer. However, the offer was withdrawn when Districts 1-3 **turned down** the offer.

In November of 2014, the CDD4 Board of Supervisors voted to use their own funds to install centerline striping on their paths due to the expressed safety concerns of their residents. After seeing how the reflective yellow centerline striping had improved visibility in District 4, residents throughout The Villages began asking for visibility improvements on the MMPs in their own Districts.

There were numerous meetings and hours of discussion in 2015 by representatives from Community Development Districts 1 through 10 and the AAC. The possible solutions discussed were centerline striping, edge line striping and the plan recommended: striping and reflective pavement markings, (RPMs), for the **island medians**, geometrically constrained locations*, trail-side obstructions** and roundabouts. (See Figures 1-3 below).

While there were supporters for each of these options, in order to have consistency throughout the MMP system, all the **District Boards** came together and agreed to the implementation of the plan recommended by the Engineer last May. His plan did not include any centerline or edge line striping. **The Boards expressed a willing-**

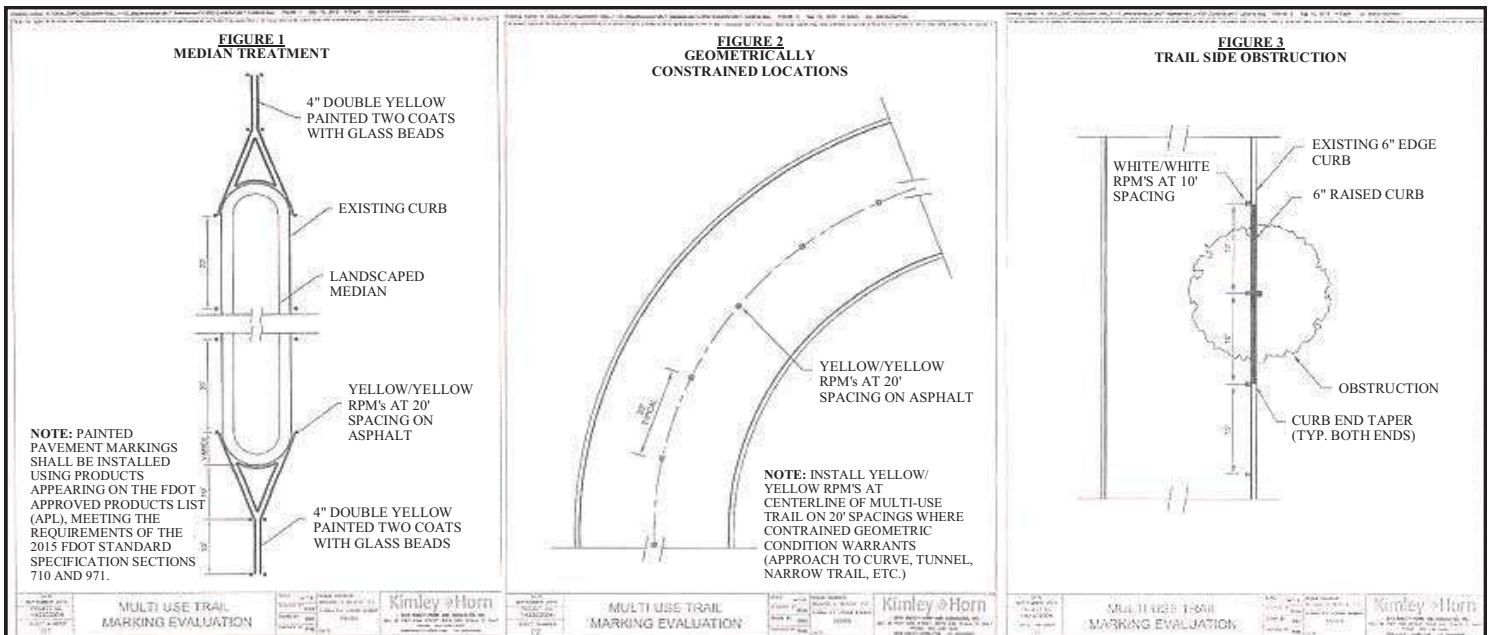
ness to evaluate the plan's effectiveness to solve the visibility concerns and agreed to have the project go out for bids.

At their February, 2016 meetings, the Project Wide Advisory Committee, (PWAC – made up of one representative from **each of** Districts 5 – 10), Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4, as well as the AAC, all agreed to the implementation of the plan recommended by the Engineer. The project is expected to begin this May, (after the seasonal residents have gone), and will likely take 45 to 75 days to complete the work on all 42 miles of MMPs.

*A geometrically constrained location is an area of sharp curvature where sight distance is reduced for MMP travelers in golf carts.

These areas are primarily located where the MMP curves quickly to pass behind entrance gates at main road crossings and at tunnel approach ramps and in the tunnels themselves.

** A trail side obstruction is a physical object (such as the root of an Oak tree) that directly protrudes into the path itself. At these locations, they will construct a raised curb section and RPMs. (Note that there are numerous locations along the MMP system where landscaping and other improvements exist near the edge of the trail, but these are not considered obstructions by the Engineer.) □



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POA Seeks Its Next Bulletin Editor

It was announced in the November POA Bulletin that Elaine Dreidame, after serving for five years as both the POA President and Editor of the monthly POA Bulletin, would not seek re-election for the President's position. She agreed to continue to extend her service on the POA Board of Directors in the role of Past President, and that she would continue to serve as Editor of the POA Bulletin until a replacement could be identified. The time has come to begin that process.

We are looking for an editor/writer, with a good sense of what makes an interesting angle to a story, and who has the ability to juggle all of the moving parts of our publication. You will plan, write, coordinate, review and edit content for the monthly POA Bulletin.

The successful candidate will be able to decide which ideas should be pursued and

which should get dropped in order to meet quality and accuracy standards. The goal is to provide exceptional, informative and engaging content which supports the mission of the POA.

Responsibilities:

- Coordinate print publishing cycle and manage content areas;
- Set publication standards and establish goals and expectations regarding emphasis of developing stories;
- Monitor news gathering operations to ensure utilization of all news sources;
- Develop story or content ideas, considering reader or audience appeal;
- Confer with POA Management regarding placement and emphasis of developing stories;
- Responsible for 280 column inches of editorial content each month;
- Verify facts, dates, and statistics;
- Oversee layout and check content for accuracy and errors;
- Proofread, edit and improve stories or pieces;
- Recruit and manage writers and reporters

(if needed);

- Comply with media law and ethical guidelines;
- Meet deadlines and budget requirements.

Requirements:

- Full time Villages Resident;
- Belief in the POA Mission Statement (found on page two of this Bulletin);
- Familiarity with The Villages government structure and current issues;
- Proven working experience as an editor/writer preferred but not required;
- Strong writing/editing/proofreading skills;
- Hands on experience with MS Office or other publishing tools;
- An eye for detail along with critical thinking;
- Prioritizing and multitasking.

If you are interested in applying, please send a copy of your resume and a short statement on why you would like to be considered for this position to POA President Cliff Wiener at poa4us@hotmail.com at your earliest convenience. If you have questions, Cliff can be reached at (352) 430-8497, or Elaine can be reached at (352) 753-5069. □

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Amenity Authority Committee Meeting Summary February 10, 2016

Old Business:

• Capital Project Update:

Schwartz Park – The following renovations are expected to be completed in April: the demolition of the pier; construction of a new picnic pavilion with barbeque station; renewal of the deck on Lake Paradise; construction of permanent erosion control; site drainage and new parking areas; installation of new landscaping, lighting and irrigation; and utility service upgrades. The estimated cost is \$225,000.

Saddlebrook Village Recreation Center:

Two new items, a reconfiguration of the Saddlebrook lobby area and relocation of The Villages Box Office (to the Savannah Center) in order to expand the billiards room were approved for further review.

Mulberry Grove Pickleball Courts – The fence surrounding the courts is completed and the surface of the courts will be completed as soon as weather conditions permit.

Platform Tennis – Added to the "wish list".

• **Springdale Fitness Trail – CDD4 – Runs from Belle Meade Circle to Buena Vista Boulevard near Mulberry Recreation Center:** After a discussion regarding whether or not this trail needed improvements and/or widening, this item was tabled. (Kimley-Horn and Associates advised that it would cost an estimated \$771,400 to widen the 1.3 mile trail from 11 feet to 16.5 feet, including curbing.) District Manager Tutt recommended that no improvements be made at this time because it is in very good condition and we do not know what impact, if any, the additional 165 east villas which are to be built near the trail will have on usage. The Committee agreed to place the trail on the list of other paths north of CR466 that have not yet been reconstructed.

Committee Member Comments:

1) A motion made by Mr. Deakin to encourage staff to consider hands-free facilities in restrooms during new and reconstruction of the facilities was approved by the Committee.

2) Mr. Bell requested that the term "wish list" be changed to "Project Consideration List".

PLEASE GO TO THE www.district.gov WEBSITE FOR THE OFFICIAL MINUTES, AGENDAS AND MEETING SCHEDULE. NEXT AAC MEETING: Wednesday, March 9, 9AM, AT THE SAVANNAH CENTER. □



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Morse Bridge Embankment Improvements

District Manager Tutt advised the Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC) that it is believed that the "bridge embankment became saturated and failed/slid into the lake", during the heavy rains in July of 2013, at which time it was mitigated and stabilized. Subsequently, Sumter County, the owner of the actual bridge, hired Kimley-Horn and Associates (KHA) to complete a review of the bridge and roadway and they determined that no further deterioration of the embankment had occurred.

During the October, 2015 PWAC meeting, District Staff recommended that the PWAC engage KHA to provide an Individual Project Order (IPO), which would provide the options available to the Districts and preliminary estimates of cost, benefits and drawbacks of each of the options presented to protect the slope and the integrity of the roadway. A Supervisor inquired if the Sumter County Engineer's Report had identified that no additional sluffing had occurred, which is the concern the District is attempting to correct. District Staff advised that the original incident was either the result of sluffing or a sinkhole and that once the stabilization was completed, a survey was done which identified that approximately 14 feet of embankment was lost. While no additional sluffing has occurred, there have been cracks identified in the block wall on the south side of the island, which indicates shifting.

At their February 1, 2016 meeting, the PWAC reviewed and then recommended approval of the KHA Individual Project Order which would entail an analysis of the slope stability for the embankment alongside the bridge, which included the hiring of a geotech-

(Continued on page 12)

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Morse Bridge

(Continued from page 11)

nical firm to obtain field samples of the existing embankment. So, do not be concerned when you see work being done from the bridge. It was explained that this would be done for better stability of the boring equipment.

The cost for the engineering work is "not to exceed" \$72,450. Note, the study is specific to the structure of the embankment. **The bridge construction itself is fine.** The Committee was advised that at this time there is no way to know what the costs of remediation might be. It could be from \$0, with no work needing to be done, to millions of dollars. About 98% of any funds needed will come from CDDs 5-10 residents via their annual non-ad valorem CDD maintenance assessment, while commercial property owners in Lake Sumter Landing will be responsible for about 2% of any costs. □

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First Baptist Church Terminates and Withdraws from Contract with the AAC/VCCDD

What happened??? An article on this matter in the February 22nd edition of the Daily Sun advised that, "The District may be looking elsewhere for new recreational sites after the First Baptist Church at The Villages announced Sunday it would not be selling its Fellowship Hall (old Church) and 10 acres to the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) because appraisals were too low." The article quoted an email received by Ms. Tutt from Ken Howard, Pastor for Ministries and Administration which stated, "...It has been a pleasure doing business with you, and I regret the unexpectedly low appraisals resulted in our need to withdraw from the proposed sale."

However, the POA has heard from three different sources who attended services on February 21st (so, this is not likely to be just a rumor) that Senior Pastor Bob Perry told his congregation that they were "stepping back" from an offer from The Villages Developer to purchase part of the Church property. He indi-



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cated that The Villages had wanted to buy the acreage that abutted the north end of The Villages, which included the original Church building for possible conversion into an additional recreation center, and to gain at least golf cart access to new villas that are scheduled to be built just west of the old Church property.

According to our sources, Pastor Perry advised his congregation that the Church Leadership had initially told the The Villages (he did not clarify whether he meant the Developer and/or the AAC/VCCDD) that they would be willing to sell the Church property **IF** The Villages was willing to make up at the new church area they were planning to build (new fellowship hall), for the facilities that would be lost in the sale of the original building which included a kitchen and hall where church dinners are held, meeting rooms, a library, offices and a baptismal pool.

He also told his congregation that after the appraisals were undertaken, The Villages advised them that it was unwilling to fulfill its offer to make up for the facilities that would be lost if they sold the original building, and that was the reason the Church withdrew its interest in selling the old Church property to the AAC.

This sounded strange because the appraisal was requested and paid for with funds from the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) and any negotiations the Developer may have had with Pastor Perry that might have impacted the purchase of the Church were not a part of the AAC decision to move forward with the appraisal process. – at least they were not divulged to the AAC. (The appraisals for the Church property were \$1,160,000 – AAC, and \$1,175,000 – Church. AAC expenditures to date for the appraisal are \$24,081.50 with invoices from the VCCDD attorney and an engineer which are not anticipated to be substantial still outstanding.)

As a result, the **AAC Baptist Church Workshop which was scheduled for March 3rd has been cancelled. The next regular AAC meeting will be Wednesday, March 9th, at 9:00AM at Savannah Center.** We are hopeful that the conflicting information on this issue will be clarified at this meeting and that there will be discussions regarding moving forward with the investigation of the 40 acres for sale on CR42. □



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CDD4 Expansion Issues

On February 12th, the CDD4 Supervisors voted unanimously to expand the borders of their District and authorized "...the Chairman and all District staff to file a petition with

Marion County, Florida, requesting the passage of an ordinance amending the District's boundaries, and authorizing such other actions as are necessary in furtherance of the boundary amendment process; and providing an effective date."

This amendment to the District's boundaries will result in the addition of approximately 66.9 acres. In addition, the Developer

agreed to provide sufficient funds to District 4 "to reimburse the District for any expenditures including, but not limited to, legal, engineering and other consultant fees, filing fees, administrative fees, and other expenses, if any".

CDD4 Supervisors also approved an "interim funding and acquisition agreement"

(Continued on page 16)

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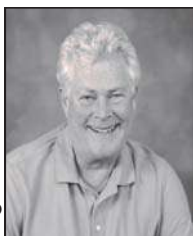
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CDD4 Expansion

(Continued from page 15)

with the Developer. Since CDD4 is not yet in a position to issue the \$5 million "special assessment bonds to finance the infrastructure improvements on this acreage, the agreement provides for funding by the Developer to con-

tinue construction with the agreement that CDD4 will purchase the improvements from the Developer once the bonds have been issued and monies become available.

This action will provide for the addition of 300 additional courtyard villas just south of CR42 which will be divided into two parcels, (135 units on the west parcel and 165 units on

the east parcel), each being responsible to pay their share of the infrastructure construction costs, not paid for by the Developer, which is estimated to be approximately \$5 million.

This will result in a bond debt on each unit of approximately \$16-17,000. Current residents of CDD4 will have no financial exposure for the cost of the infrastructure or for the \$5 million bond.

Additionally, each of the property owners of the 300 units will have to pay their annual non-ad valorem maintenance assessment to CDD4, thus reducing the overall administrative costs to District 4's current residents by about 6%. It is estimated that this will bring in an additional \$87,000 to District 4 annually.

The District administrative staff had also been requested to prepare an estimated annual maintenance cost, that the additional units would incur, which they estimated would be approximately \$42,000, leaving a positive balance of about \$45,000 each year, which could be put into reserves for any future needs. District Manager Tutt advised that the estimated cost included future rejuvenation of the roadways in those parcels.

It was evident that the CDD4 Supervisors did not take this decision lightly, as they had over one hour of additional questions for Mr. Gary Moyer, the Developer's representative, before they were ready to make a Motion. A few of their inquiries were as follow:

1) Will the infrastructure bond pose ANY additional financial burden on the current CDD4 residents? Mr. Moyer advised that the **TOTAL project** infrastructure cost would be approximately \$9.7 million. The **villa portion of the infrastructure** would be \$4.9 million, plus financing costs, resulting in the need for CDD4 to issue \$5 million in bonds, and the Developer will pick up any overage.

2) We have had sinkholes throughout the area, many of which have occurred in the lined retention ponds and they can be very costly to repair. Will the retention areas designated for each parcel be wet ponds or dry ponds? Mr. Moyer advised that neither of the water retention areas would be lined – they would both be "dry ponds".

3) The additional 66.9 acres will include approximately 21 acres of non-assessable land (no homes on it). Will maintenance costs be covered by the 300 villa units? The response from Mr. Moyer was "Yes".

(Continued on page 17)

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CDD4 Expansion

(Continued from page 16)

4) Will the costs of the two Neighborhood Recreation Centers (postal station, swimming pool, bocce and shuffle board courts) costs be paid for with bond funds? The answer was "No. They would be paid for with Developer funds."

5) Mr. Moyer received several questions related to test borings in and around the retention areas.

6) Who would pay for landscaping and maintenance of buffers between the new parcels and future commercial entities? Mr. Moyer advised that this would be the responsibility of the commercial entities, not the District.

7) Will this development impact the water pressure in other areas of CDD4? Mr. Moyer stated it would not, because a separate new water line provided by Marion County Utilities, (which is a different provider than for the rest of The Villages), is being put in for the parcels.

8) CDD4 will need to issue the \$5 million dollars in bonds before all of the units are sold. Who will pay for the annual assessment on the unsold lots? Mr. Moyer stated that the Developer would be responsible for paying it on each unit until it is sold.

9) Questions about utilities were raised and it was stated that all of the utilities would be

underground and that there would be no natural gas lines to those areas.

Recreation Issues

While the "Expansion" issue has been resolved, the second part regarding amenity recreation facilities issue is still unsettled. For example:

1) Will the Developer donate the two Neighborhood Recreation Centers to the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) or require the AAC pay for them? And,

2) Will the AAC purchase the 40 acres for sale on CR42 for a possible executive golf course, Villages recreation center, and other amenity facilities?

Hopefully, a discussion on all of these issues will take place at the regular AAC Meeting on March 9, 2016, at the Savannah Center, at 9AM. □

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Our Gardening Column:

Living Fencesby Anne Lambrecht, Master Gardener
annegarden@embarqmail.com

Living fences constructed of shrubbery, trees or flowering bushes is an attractive and environmentally sound way to define your property's boundaries, provide privacy and screen unsightly objects.

Living fences have many attributes:

1. provide privacy from street traffic and neighbors;
2. provide friendly havens for birds, butterflies and other desirable fauna;
3. create a sound barrier to reduce noise or act as a windbreak;
4. mask distant or unsightly objects.

In the Villages, and in many communities like ours, any living fence must have approval from the Architectural Review Committee (ARC), as there are some restrictions. Your application must include your site plan and landscaping choices. Here's how to get started on your own living fence. Define the boundary or location. If you're using the fence as a boundary marker, you'll first want to determine the precise location of your property line.

You need to know/find out:

- Are there any buried utility lines? (call 811).
- Check for irrigation heads and lines.

- Have I been approved by ARC? (Architectural Review Committee).
- What's the condition of the soil? (Get a soil pH test through your county agricultural extension service).
- Assess sunlight, soil composition and moisture conditions. You need to know these specific growing conditions in order to have the right plants in the right place.
- What is the purpose of the fence? (Most living fences won't keep dogs out or children in.)
- Do you want a formal hedge or a more natural, looser look?
- How long, tall or wide does it need to be?
- Do you want a straight-line fence or something with a pattern or a more layered look

Create a layout plan. Before picking up a shovel, sketch a rough plan of the area where you would like to create your living fence. Choose the right plants. Before heading to the nursery, get an idea of what type and size plants you'll need. The plants you choose should fit the landscape and home design. Be sure to bring your plan along. By discussing your ideas with a professional, he or she can tell you if the plants you want will work or suggest something better suited for your area. And if your budget allows, buy plants in 3 gallon pots, so you won't have to wait years for them to fill in.

You might want plants of differing heights, as opposed to a tall screening, which attract a greater diversity of wildlife than those on one level. You also can use a cluster of plants to surround a patio or lanai, hide a shed, define a vegetable garden or add drama to a drab area.

Here are some popular plant suggestions to create living fences for our zone (9a):

Viburnum Odoratissimum, also known as Sweet Viburnum, is a fast growing shrub with large, leathery, dark green, glossy leaves and clusters of extremely fragrant, small, white flowers, covering the plant in springtime. It grows 6 ft. or better. Hot sun and poor soil is not a problem.

Japanese Boxwood Buxus microphylla or Florida Boxwood Schaefferia frutescens are the only recommended boxwoods for our zone. Japanese boxwood: Easy care and cold hardy. Has small, thick leaves, with a slow rate of growth and a bushy habit. Since these boxwoods grow so slowly, plant them 2 feet apart. Florida boxwood: most are seen as small to medium-sized shrubs. Leaves are yellow-green and rolled over slightly along the margins. Small, greenish white flowers appear in the leaf axils in compact clusters.

Hollies, Ilex species, are reliable, low-maintenance plants for Florida landscapes. Diverse sizes, forms, and textures exist, ranging from large trees to dwarf shrubs. Some hollies can be used as informal or formal hedges or as foundation plants, while others make beautiful accent or specimen plants. Many are valued for their colorful berries, which provide food for birds and brighten the fall and winter seasons.

Simpson's Stopper Myrcianthes fragrans is a beautiful native shrub, easily trimmed and maintained. Finely textured and glossy apple green leaves with little or no insect or disease problems. Gorgeous fragrant, creamy white blooms in the spring, the flowers turning to red berries which songbirds, like cardinals, absolutely love.

Here are some other plant options for living fences: clumping bamboo, pineapple guava, podocarpus, lady palm, dwarf Walter's viburnum. And, just like any other plant in your yard, your living fence will need to be fertilized, watered and pruned correctly to achieve the look and coverage you desire.

"Good fences make good neighbors". For information on some of the above plant choices, go to <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu> □

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IRS Imposter Scams

According to the AARP Fraud Watch Network, IRS Imposter Scams remain the nation's biggest scam. Phone calls come from fraudsters posing as IRS agents. They threaten you with arrest, deportation or seizure of property or businesses, unless immediate payment is made for alleged back taxes. Recently, bogus mailing and faxes have been added to the methods they use to contact you. Remember, the real IRS doesn't call out-of-the-blue, nor demand immediate payment, especially by prepaid debit card or wire transfer.

According to Amy Hebert, a Consumer Education Specialist with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), complaints to the FTC about IRS imposter scams have shot up over the last year — by almost 50,000 complaints.

Here's how this scam works.

- You get a call from a scammer pretending to be with the IRS.
- Your Caller ID might show that the IRS is calling you.
- The caller might give you a badge number and might know the last four digits of your Social Security number.
- You are told "You owe money"; "You better pay now or you will be arrested"; "Put money on a prepaid debit card or wire it to us."
- If you pay, you find out it's all a lie. It wasn't the IRS. It was a scam. If you have already sent the money, **IT'S GONE!**

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Here are some of the warning signs that you may be the target of an IRS Impersonator Scam:

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 - Phone – NO
 - Email – NO
 - Text – NO
 - US Mail – YES
2. How will the IRS ask you to pay?
 - With a prepaid debit card – NO
 - With a money transfer – NO
 - The real IRS will not require a specific type of payment

When you have a tax problem, the IRS will first contact you by mail. The IRS won't ask you to wire money, pay with a prepaid debit card, or share your credit card information over the phone.

If you get what you suspect is an IRS Impersonator scam call:

- Don't give the caller information, such as your financial or other personal information.
- Write down details such as the name and phone number of the caller.
- Hang up. Never call them back in response to a recorded message.
- Call the IRS directly if you are worried that the call is real. You can call the IRS at 800-829-1040, or online at www.irs.gov.
- Report the call by filing a complaint with

the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at www.tigta.gov, or call them at 800-366-4484. And, report the call to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at www.ftc.gov/complaint, or call them at 800-FTC-HELP (800-382-4357).

- Warn friends and family. Tell people that you know that these calls are scams.

Want to help your friends and family?

Share this information with them and get more information at ftc.gov/taxidtheft.

Remember, no one will watch out for your interests better than **YOU**. When in doubt as to what you can do to protect yourself against unscrupulous IRS impersonators, contact your nearest Seniors vs. Crime office in The Villages for advice or assistance. There is never a charge for their services.

Seniors vs. Crime can be reached at 352-753-7775 at the Marion County Sheriff's Office in The Villages; 352-689-4600, extension 4606, at the Sumter County Sheriff's Office in The Villages; or 352-750-1914 at the Wildwood Police Annex in Brownwood. Volunteers at all three offices are ready, willing and able to assist you. To keep up with the latest scams, **LIKE 'Seniors vs. Crime Region 4'** on Facebook. □

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Accreditation means patient safety: FDA urges patient protection

The US Food and Drug Administration has reviewed a decade of data concerning the delivery of radiation for cancer treatment. In April of 2010, they concluded that much greater safety measures are necessary. The agency realizes the critical need for more intense patient protection.

In light of the FDA's conclusion, the American College of Radiology (ACR) called for compliance with its accreditation program for facilities that deliver radiation therapy to cancer patients. Years ago, the ACR established credentialing boards for this specialty. Rigid standards were established. So rigorous that, in radiation treatment, only a small percentage of all facilities are approved. Every facet is evaluated including the physicians, physics and treatment staff, nursing staff, equipment, quality control, and training. The ACR evaluates completely and methodically. Not one thing is left to chance.

In our area of Florida, few facilities are accredited by the ACR. The Robert Boissoneault Oncology Institute shares this distinction with sites like the Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, the Moffitt Cancer Center, Tampa, and UF Shands.

When you are seeking cancer care, turn to those who have already earned the accreditation and recommendation of the American College of Radiology. Make your decisions with confidence.

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