Message From the Secretary

Richard Prudom, Secretary
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

In November, we have the opportunity to recognize many important observances, including Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month, Family Caregivers Month, and Veterans Day.

As our senior population continues to grow, so does the incidence of Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD). With this increase also comes the growing need for care partners who give so selflessly to their loved ones. Dementia affects whole family dynamics, but in Florida, our Dementia Care and Cure Initiative (DCCI) and Livable Florida efforts work in tandem to make our state age-friendly and one where people can live well and age well regardless of age or ability – even after a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease or dementia.

There are more than 1.1 million caregivers of those with ADRD in Florida, and they need our sensitivity, engagement, and advocacy. It is important that we focus on care programs while we work toward a cure so that the millions of Floridians who are affected by dementia can receive the support they so rightly deserve. Across the state, DCCI is expanding, with participation from community leaders, business owners, elected officials, law enforcement, health care professionals, and more. Through DCCI, as we spread awareness of dementia, the signs and symptoms, and how to respectfully engage with affected families, communities are being equipped to provide positive interactions for all in an inclusive and engaging way.

I am so thankful for the leadership of Governor DeSantis to improve the lives of Floridians affected by dementia. As Governor, he has unveiled his action plan to combat dementia and ensure that Floridians have more support and access to important services. He directed the Department of Health (DOH) to include ADRD as its own priority area in the State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP); we are the only state in the nation to do so. The Governor also instructed DOH to apply to be a Center for Excellence pursuant to the federal BOLD Act in order to position Florida to pursue and receive federal grants for evidence-based approaches to treatment and prevention of Alzheimer’s, dementia, and cognitive decline. Governor DeSantis has encouraged communities not already participating in DCCI to join the efforts to make our state Dementia-Caring, and he has also challenged the institutions that house the state’s 17 Memory Disorder Clinics to provide matching funding to serve more individuals with evaluation and diagnostic testing for dementia. The Governor has also increased funding for the Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative, which provides important services, including respite care for caregivers. Florida is leading on this important issue, and our work will continue until every Floridian living with dementia can say that they have the services and support they need to live well.

November also marks Veterans Day across our great nation. Floridians have a rich history of military service, and our state is one of the most military and veteran friendly in the U.S. There are more than 1.5 million veterans living in Florida – one of the highest in the country! Nearly 52 percent of Florida’s veterans are over the age of
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

EDITOR’S NOTE

Allison Burtoft
Editor-in-Chief, Elder Update

Florida is known for being a great place for seniors to live well. Each year, more individuals over the age of 60 move here. Nearly six million seniors call Florida their home and continue to spend their golden years in the Sunshine State.

Not only is Florida a place where many seniors live, but there are also over 1.5 million veterans. Soldiers come to Florida to serve their time in the military, and some of them stay once their service is complete. At the Department of Elder Affairs, we would like to extend thanks to those who have fought for our country.

Each November, the Elder Update reserves space to recognize veterans in honor of Veterans Day on November 11. In this issue you’ll find stories of brave men and women who fought for our country. You’ll read about their past, see where they are now, and learn about the historic impact they’ve made.

In this issue, we are featuring several veteran-focused articles contributed by the Department of Elder Affairs, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, and other state agencies. The Florida Department of Veterans Affairs also shares its recent updates.

While this issue features stories for and about veterans, we do not shy away from other topics. We continue to include stories and information that affect all Florida seniors as well.

You’ll find helpful information on a variety of topics in this issue. Tallahassee Police officers share their advice to seniors and give you the opportunity to write in and ask questions on page 4. DOEA’s SHINE Program shares important updates to Medicare, and Judy continues to answer all of your Medicare questions on page 7. The Department’s Office of the Inspector General shares advice on preventing fraud while recognizing International Fraud Awareness Week. The Florida Sports Foundation recognizes a great senior athlete and reminds you to register for the upcoming Florida Senior Games. Florida’s Office of Financial Regulation shares tips on budgeting for the holidays, and the Department of Environmental Protection tells you all about Florida’s award-winning state parks.

There is something for everyone within this issue. We hope you find these pages informative. To all of our subscribers who are veterans of the armed forces, thank you for your service. Your service is appreciated by generations of all ages. To our senior subscribers, thank you for choosing to live in Florida and for subscribing to the Elder Update.

IMPORTANT ELDER UPDATE SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE

In order to comply with the United States Postal Service regulations guiding non-profit periodicals, we must regularly update our subscription list and provide proof of your request for our newspaper. To prevent an interruption of your subscription, please renew by completing the subscription request form on Page 21 or visit elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/elder_update_subscribe.php to complete your form online. You can also subscribe or renew your subscription by calling 850-414-2000. Don’t forget to include your phone number in case we need to contact you. We look forward to continuing to serve you.

ABOVE: Anna Rios of Jacksonville signs up for her copy of the Elder Update.
Isom “Ike” Rigell's voice falters when he recounts going through some of his youngest daughter’s things in his attic after she got married many years ago.

Among the old clothes, toys, and papers, he found a small notebook from when she was a little girl and he was a very busy chief engineer working long hours on the Apollo program. Inside the small pad was a short, excited entry in a child's handwriting.

It said: "Oh joy, my dad's having supper with us tonight!"

"That kind of hit me," said Rigell, now 96, thinking back on his discovery, his eyes filling with tears. “It was so rare. I’d (usually) come home, get my meal out of the oven, and warm it up. Even when you’re home, you get a lot of calls. It was full-time.”

It was indeed full-time.

As NASA's chief engineer and the deputy director of the Apollo Space Program launches, Rigell oversaw roughly 400 engineers and 8,000 contractors and was slammed, working to turn President John F. Kennedy's challenge to put a man on the moon by the end of the 1960s into a reality. It was grueling, long, hard work.

What Rigell recalls most vividly all these years later is the commitment of not just the workers, but their families.

“We were so dedicated,” he said, adding that many times the work days turned into nights. “You need to give a lot credit for all of this to the (wives). The women really sacrificed.”

Sacrifice was not a stranger to Rigell. At 18, he enlisted in the Marines after graduating from high school and found himself on the Midway Atoll watching the Battle of Midway, the greatest naval fight of World War II, play out in front of him.

It was obvious not the only front row seat to history that Rigell has enjoyed during his lifetime. As chief engineer and the deputy Apollo launch director, he played a critical role in the success of the first moon landing 50 years ago.

“The countdown was remarkable,” he recalls. “And the anticipation of the first time a guy puts his footprint on a heavenly body…we were so glued to that TV to see that guy coming down.”

Rigell's place in Apollo history really begins after he made it home safely from the war — only though divine intervention, he says — and enrolled at Georgia Tech where he earned a degree in engineering.

By the time he graduated, the Cold War was in full swing, and Rigell
Dear Officer,

My husband and I live in a senior citizen gated community with no guard. My husband is careless when it comes to security with our house and car. He will forget to lock the doors of the car and house, and he never closes the garage door. We have had a few house and car burglaries in our neighborhood. I think he believes because we live in a gated community, we don’t need to worry. Could you please give me your thoughts on neighborhood security?

Signed,
Apprehensive in Apopka

Answer:
Gates keep honest people honest. Gated communities may provide a false sense of security for some, as a determined criminal will find a way to enter, especially if they feel the gate is protecting items of great value. If a community resident is the victim of a crime, it could invite the criminals to return due to the accessibility of unlocked property. Thinking any neighborhood is immune to crime is misplaced confidence. You may want to set an alarm serving as a reminder to ensure that your vehicles and doors are locked before you go to bed. You could also consider having your local law enforcement come to your residence to complete a security survey of your property.

Dear Officer,

I have been receiving harassing telephone calls. Do you have any suggestions as to how I can stop them?

Answer:
The first issue is to determine the type of harassing call. If they are threatening or sexual in nature, contact your local law enforcement agency and file a report. If the calls are soliciting donations or regarding a bank account or other type of financial issue which you know or believe is a scam, you can begin by filing a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission. You can register for the national Do Not Call list at complaints.donotcall.gov or call 1-888-382-1222. If you call, it must be from the phone you wish to register.

With the development of spoofing, often the Do Not Call lists are not stopping all calls. In June 2019, the FCC ruled that phone companies could block unwanted robocalls before they reach consumers. Some cellular providers have responded by providing free services to filter spam calls. Others offer a call-blocking service for a fee. Contact your phone service provider to see what they offer, whether it is free or requires payment, and ask for assistance in obtaining a service you may want.

Dear Officer,

I received a call asking for donations for an organization claiming to be a Police Officer Association. How can I know if this is actually a police officer and a real organization?

Answer:
There are a couple of ways to check this. The first is to do an open source search on the internet by placing the name of the organization in your search engine (Google, Bing, etc.). This will often give you information from others who may have had contact with the organization or a news article in which law enforcement is warning of a scam. The second is to visit the IRS webpage and search their “Charities and Nonprofits” page. This gives you the ability to search for tax-exempt charitable organizations by state or region, and then by name of organization. If you don’t feel comfortable with either of those searches, call your local law enforcement agency and ask. We would rather take the time to answer a question than see a citizen become a victim and endure the time and frustration necessary to recover lost funds.

If you have a question for the Tallahassee Police Department Financial Crimes Unit, please send it by email to eueditor@elderaffairs.org or by regular mail to Elder Update: Ask an Officer, at 4040 Esplanade Way, Tallahassee, FL 32399.

The Tallahassee Police Department’s Financial Crimes Unit currently consists of one sergeant, four investigators, and one customer service aide who oversees the online reporting for the agency. On average, the Financial Crimes Unit investigates approximately 1,500 cases per year of fraudulent activity consisting of grand theft, credit/debit card fraud, identity theft, money laundering, and embezzlement.

SECRETARY’S MESSAGE...
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

65, and they have served in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and in post-911 times. The dedication and selflessness of our veterans are unmatched, as they stepped forward when needed, oftentimes fighting in faraway lands, to defend freedom and the principles of America. This Veterans Day and beyond let’s stand together with our veterans and thank them for their commitment and service to our country. We must do all that we can to support them in return.
Nick Gandy
Florida Sports Foundation

It’s all about the training for Florida Senior Games athlete Gary Perigo. The actual competition is just a benefit from the training.

When he’s not training and competing himself, he’s creating opportunities for others to train and compete in the Lake Senior Games, a Florida Senior Games Local Series Qualifier.

In each of the sports Perigo has entered in the Florida Senior Games over the last 10 years, he has improved with his training. He can also claim the same kind of success as the Director of the Lake Senior Games, as participation has increased five fold over the last six years.

“I love to train and love to compete,” Perigo said. “It’s a way for me to relax and get away from the stresses of life. I don’t let bad shots on the golf course or on the archery range bother me. I just move on to the next shot.”

Perigo’s first entry into the Florida Senior Games came in 2010 on the golf course. He played golf for four years (2010-13) lowering his score from a 91 to a 78 over that time. At the 2013 Florida Senior Games, he won a silver medal in the 55-59 age group, coming in second to Broward Sapp, a multiple-medal-winning golfer at a state and national level.

“He beat me by two strokes,” Perigo said.

The medal-winning performance must have inspired him to bring the Senior Games to his home county. The motivation was so strong that after being turned down for funding by local officials, he formed a corporation and The Lake Senior Games debuted in April 2014.

“I lived in Seminole County and had played in the Golden Age Games in Sanford,” he said. “The Games needed to be represented in Lake County.”

Now as an administrator and athlete, Perigo started in archery competition in 2014. His first time pulling back the Barebow Compound bow resulted in a score of 377. With practice and training, he upped his score to a 523 in 2016 to qualify for the 2017 National Senior Games, where he won a gold medal.

“I took up archery because the Lake Senior Games coordinator needed some assistance,” he said. “I thought to myself, anyone can shoot a bow.”

But as any accomplished archer will tell you, it takes more than just lining up in front of a target. Perigo’s increased score was a result of lessons and more training. Through that training, he learned the fundamentals of the sport so well, he has advanced to an instructor.

Besides his better scores and medal-winning performances as an athlete over the years, the Lake Senior Games have continued to grow.

Over six years, since 2014, the Lake Senior Games have grown from just 70 athletes competing in seven sports to more than 350 competing in 10 sports.

On top of those accomplishments, Perigo’s love of training and competition has also increased his well-being, and he lost 65 pounds over the last three years. His resting heart rate, once at over 70 beats per minute, has decreased into the 40s and his blood pressure has dropped from 170/90 to 124/80.

“Training is fun,” says Perigo. “Living healthy is fun. I can run distances now and not get winded. I won third place in my age group at a 5K recently. My body forgot how to run.”

His on-the-field and in-the-gym efforts have led to the growth of the Lake Senior Games. At events and while working out, Perigo never passes up the opportunity to spread the word about the Senior Games program.

“I’m training not just to be healthy but because I’m in the Senior Games,” he tells others. “The Senior Games allow people to be introduced to a program to do something they did when they were younger.”

Now catching up to a bucket-list item from his own youth, Perigo has taken up pole vaulting and sought the assistance of a Florida Senior Games pole vaulting legend, Joe Johnston, of Apopka.
Nick Ross, Retired Navy
SHINE Volunteer Counselor

What started out as a discussion over a brown bag lunch has blossomed into a statewide initiative to help veterans and their families with understanding and using Medicare and Medicaid services through a strong partnership between VA hospitals and Planning and Service Areas (PSAs) in their catchment areas.

Mr. Thomas Wisnieski, Director of the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, and Nick Ross, then Assistant Director, were discussing what Nick would do after he retired from the VA. A public service announcement on WUFT, the local public radio station, about opportunities for SHINE volunteers in the area had caught his attention. The two men started talking about the benefits of having such a counselor there in the hospital for veterans and their spouses since such a high percentage of the veteran population was eligible for Medicare.

About 15 months later, Nick (now retired from the VA, as well as the US Navy) made inquiries to PSA 3’s Cheryl Harris about becoming a SHINE counselor and having a SHINE counselor available in the VA hospitals in Gainesville and Lake City to serve veterans and their families. Cheryl is always eager to recruit new counselors, and the idea of being able to help veterans and their families was a great fit with the mission of SHINE.

Nick went through the training and mentoring program and was eager to get started. He contacted his former boss at the VA and reminded him of the lunch conversation they had had. The Director was fully on board, and the sites were quickly set up. Counseling and outreach activities began. Individual counseling sessions, as well as informal educational activities were well received by both veterans and their family members as they came to the hospitals for their medical appointments.

The news spread quickly among veterans by word of mouth and through various veterans organizations in the area. Hospital social workers welcomed SHINE’s expertise on Medicare and help with state and federal Medicare financial assistance program screening activities.

Nick reasoned that if the SHINE/VA partnership worked in North Central Florida, it would be well received elsewhere in the state. He asked to present at a statewide SHINE leadership conference and spoke about the value veterans and their families got from SHINE.

Other VA hospitals in the state heard about the program’s success, and their local PSAs began outreach activities to establish similar programs through the state. In areas where there were no VA hospitals, large VA clinics were used as counseling sites. As of today, there are SHINE counseling activities in half of the VA hospitals in the state with others in various stages of opening. VA clinics in Jacksonville and Viera also have SHINE counseling available.

Counseling veterans often involves overlap between VA and Medicare services. While SHINE volunteers are well qualified to help with Medicare issues, they must depend on others to provide VA expertise. The logical people to assist with this are the specially trained Veteran Service Officers from the Florida Department of Veteran Affairs (FDVA).

Nick initiated a joint meeting with the state SHINE leadership team and the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs leadership. Together, the two organizations started work on a partnership of cross referrals and other cooperative efforts. SHINE counselors helping veterans often refer them to the Veteran Service Officers for VA issues. The reverse is also true.

The benefits of these partnerships to veterans and their families has been proven many times already. So what’s next? Well, if it works in Florida, it stands to reason that an even larger partnership around the country ought to work.
Could I Be Eligible for Medicare?

Dear Judy,

I am 52 years old, and I have just been diagnosed with ESRD. Someone told me that I am eligible for Medicare. Is this correct?

Libby

Dear Libby,

Anyone with End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) has permanent kidney damage that requires regular dialysis or a kidney transplant to maintain life. It is also Stage 5 of Chronic Kidney Disease and the GFR (Glomerular Filtration Rate) is 15 – 0.

To receive Medicare benefits, no matter the age, a person will be eligible for Parts A and B (both are needed for complete Medicare coverage) if he or she has kidney failure, requires regular dialysis, or has had a kidney transplant and one of the following applies:

- You’ve worked the required amount of time under Social Security, the Railroad Retirement Board, or as a government employee.
- You’re already getting or are eligible for Social Security or Railroad Retirement Benefits.
- You are the spouse or dependent child of a person who meets either of the above requirements.

If you already have Medicare because of age or disability and did not enroll in Part B when first eligible, you may enroll in Medicare based on ESRD and no penalty will apply. If you are enrolled in Part B and are paying a penalty and are later diagnosed with ESRD, re-enrolling based on ESRD will remove the penalty.

If you are eligible for Medicare Part A and B based on ESRD, you may enroll at your local Social Security office. Your doctor must verify your ESRD eligibility by completing a report known as the ESRD Medical Evidence Report. This is CMS Form 2728 and can be found under “Forms” on Medicare.gov.

When you enroll in Medicare based on ESRD and are on dialysis, Medicare coverage usually starts the first day of the fourth month of your dialysis treatments. However, Medicare coverage can begin the first month of a regular course of dialysis treatments if you participate in a home dialysis training program offered by a Medicare-approved training facility during the first three months of your regular course of dialysis and your doctor expects you to finish training and be able to do your own dialysis treatments.

If you have Medicare coverage only because of permanent kidney failure, Medicare coverage will end 12 months after the month you stop dialysis treatments or 36 months after the month you have a kidney transplant. However, Medicare coverage will be extended if the following occurs:

- You start dialysis again or you get a kidney transplant within 12 months after the month you stopped getting dialysis.
- You start dialysis or get another kidney transplant within 36 months after the month you get a kidney transplant.

If you have ESRD, you will usually get your health care through Original Medicare. However, if you’re already in a Medicare Advantage Plan when you develop ESRD, you may be able to stay in your plan or join another plan offered by the same company.

If you have a question you would like answered in our new Dear Judy column, please send an email to information@elderaffairs.org. You may also send a question by regular mail to:

Elder Update: Dear Judy
Florida Department of Elder Affairs
4040 Esplanade Way
Tallahassee, FL 32399-7000

JUDY ARCHEY

Judy Archey is the Area Coordinator for Putnam, Alachua, Bradford, and Union counties. She also serves as a statewide trainer for the Department of Elder Affairs’ SHINE Program.

Libby

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

Provides free, unbiased health insurance counseling and information to elders and their caregivers. Through a statewide network of trained SHINE counselors, individuals with Medicare-related questions and issues can receive personal and confidential assistance. Through the SHINE/SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) Program, SHINE counselors support the SMP mission to empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education. For more information, you may visit our website at FLORIDASHINE.ORG.
DO YOU HAVE YOUR NEW MEDICARE CARD?

Pene Miller
SHINE Program
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

If you are a Medicare beneficiary, do you have your new Medicare card? If so, breathe easy, as all is well. If you don’t have your new Medicare card, this message is for you.

In 2018, CMS (Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services) initiated the sending of a newly designed Medicare card to every Medicare beneficiary in the United States and its territories. The new card has an 11-digit sequence of numbers and capital letters instead of your Social Security number. The signature line has also been removed.

The purpose of the changes with the new Medicare card is to prevent identity theft and fraud. However, you will still need to be careful to protect it as personally identifiable information and use it only for Medicare-related business.

If you have your new Medicare card, it is important to destroy the old one, as it can no longer be used for medical care expenses beginning January 1, 2020. All health care claims will be processed using the new Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI). This means that medical claims after January 1, 2020, will be rejected if you attempt to use the old Medicare card.

Do you know someone who has not received their new Medicare card? In Florida, about 70,000 beneficiaries have not received their new card because the Social Security Administration does not have a correct address. Beneficiaries may have moved or they live where mail is not received.

If you have not received your new Medicare card, contact the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213 or go to your local Social Security office. If someone you know who has Medicare says they don’t know whether they received the new card, encourage them to look around their house for old or unopened mail. The new Medicare cards were mailed in a plain white envelope from the Department of Health and Human Services. You can also suggest that person contact Social Security.

SUDOKU

There is only one valid solution to each Sudoku puzzle. When you start a game of Sudoku, some blocks will be pre-filled for you. You cannot change these numbers in the course of the game. Each column must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9, and no two numbers in the same column of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same. Each row must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9, and no two numbers in the same row of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same. Each block must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9, and no two numbers in the same block of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same. Good luck!

Solution found on page 22.

Printed using Brain Bashers Sudoku brainbashers.com

SPECIAL thanks

Elder Update staff is deeply gratified by the many generous donations given recently by our readers. Your generosity and kindness are truly appreciated, and your donations will be used to ensure the continued production of Elder Update.

• Ms. Ellen Cummings
• Dr. TJ Rademaker
Create an Account for a Personalized Medicare Plan Finder Experience

When you create an account, you can do the following:

- Build a better drug list. We’ll make suggestions based on prescriptions you filled within the last 12 months.
- Modify your drug list and save changes.
- Compare benefits and costs in your current plan to other plans available in your area. See prices based on any help you get with drug costs.

Create your new account

If you want access to personalized information and features, you’ll need to create an account. Visit Medicare.gov/plan-compare and click “Log in or create account.”

Have the following information ready (for yourself or the person you’re helping):

- Last name and date of birth
- Current address with ZIP code or city
- Part A or Part B coverage start date (find this on your Medicare card, see left for sample)

Once you add this information and select “Next,” you can create a username and password and use your new Medicare account. You can write your username and a password hint down, just remember to keep this information in a safe place to protect your privacy.

Forgot your username or password?

If you have an existing account, but forgot the username or password, click “Trouble signing in?” under the Username box on the log in page. You’ll need your Medicare number, last name, and date of birth.

State Plan on Aging Survey
Planning and Evaluation
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs (Department) is proud to promote the well-being, safety, and independence of Florida’s seniors, their families, and caregivers. The Department is seeking assistance to determine the needs of elders in Florida and informing our state planning process. The State Plan on Aging is a strategic plan that establishes goals, objectives, and strategies for the Department and its Aging Network partners in working to provide cost-effective, high quality services to Florida’s older adults, adults with disabilities, and their caregivers.

You can help by sharing your thoughts and opinions with us through a short survey, accessed at the following link:
surveymonkey.com/r/2019FLStatePlanonAgingPublicInputSurvey

The information you provide on this survey will be invaluable in our efforts to building a dynamic and effective state plan.

If you have any questions about this survey, or have any difficulties with the link provided, please contact Heather Orender Turner at (850) 414-2095 or hturner@elderaffairs.org.
As a veteran of our nation’s military, I am proud to be the governor of the most veteran-friendly state in the country. There are more than 1.5 million veterans living in Florida, and more than 51% of them are over the age of 65. Our older veterans make up an important part of our state’s identity.

As Governor, I am working to develop statewide initiatives that provide necessary resources to our nation’s heroes. In March of this year, I joined the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs to announce the new initiative “Forward March.” This initiative aims to unite the combined energy and resources of Florida’s state agencies, veterans’ service organizations, private partners, and local communities. The initiative will work to ensure that Florida is providing the best services and support to veterans. Throughout 2019, officials with “Forward March” have met with veterans to listen to their stories and address the issues facing veterans while focusing on effective and efficient delivery of veteran services.

It is vital the State of Florida continues to recognize veterans and provide the services they need. In June, I signed two bills that will benefit veterans throughout the state—HB 501: Alternative Treatment Options for Veterans and HB 427: Honor and Remember Flag. The Alternative Treatment Options for Veterans Bill offers a pilot program focused on treating post-traumatic brain injuries in veterans using alternative therapies, which helps provide healing to those dedicated men and women who served our great country and represented our state so well through their service. The Honor and Remember Flag Bill allows the flying of a new flag that serves as a state emblem to recognize the sacrifice of those who have been killed in the military.

Florida takes great pride in being the most military and veteran-friendly state in the nation, and we thank those who continue to fight and defend our freedom. While we will never be able to fully repay these men and women for their sacrifices, we will continue to do everything we can to support them and their families. To our veterans and the men and women in our armed forces, Florida values not only your service in uniform but also the contributions you make to our state here at home. Thank you for your courage, for serving our country, and for protecting our freedom.
Recent Announcements From Governor Ron DeSantis

Governor Ron DeSantis Announces Florida’s Unemployment Rate Drops to 3.2%

On October 18, Governor Ron DeSantis announced Florida’s unemployment rate dropped to 3.2 percent, as labor force participation increases. Florida’s economy continues to create new private-sector jobs, adding 215,000 private-sector jobs over the year. The professional and business services and financial sectors continue to grow and supply the need for a diverse, high-skilled workforce.

“I can’t say it enough, Florida’s business-friendly environment continues to attract investment and growth,” said Governor DeSantis. “Prioritizing investments in innovation and talent development while keeping taxes low will continue to advance and diversify Florida’s economy.”

Governor DeSantis has taken steps to focus on Florida’s future workforce needs. In just the last two months, he has announced plans to strengthen Florida’s electric vehicle infrastructure, proposed legislation to assist in the development of FinTech training programs and provided incentives for local workforce development boards who excel in helping Florida’s veterans find meaningful employment.

Additionally, the Florida Talent Development Council held their first meeting this month to lay the ground work for the strategic plan that will ensure 60 percent of working-age Floridians hold a high-value postsecondary credential by 2030.

Positive economic indicators for the month of September include:

- Florida’s annual private-sector job growth rate of 2.8 percent continues to outpace the national job growth rate of 1.6 percent.

- The labor force continued to grow with 154,000 entering the labor force over the year at an annual growth rate of 1.5 percent.

“Governor DeSantis’ commitment to growing a solid and resilient Florida economy is outstanding,” said Executive Director of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Ken Lawson. “Each new job created is more than a data figure, it is a real opportunity for a Floridian to do meaningful work, pay their bills and live a better life. We are committed to making smart strategic investments in Florida communities to ensure we are fueling economic growth for all Floridians.”

Other positive economic indicators include:

- Private-sector industries gaining the most jobs over-the-year were:
  - Education and health services with 59,600 new jobs;
  - Professional and business services with 49,200 new jobs;
  - Leisure and hospitality with 30,300 new jobs;
  - Trade, transportation and utilities with 20,400 new jobs;
  - Financial activities with 19,100 new jobs; and
  - Construction with 16,200 new jobs.

- Florida job postings showed 277,495 openings in September 2019

- Consumer Sentiment Index is 97.3 in September 2019.

Three Local Workforce Development Boards to Receive Veterans Performance Incentive Awards

On October 4, Governor Ron DeSantis announced three Local Workforce Development Boards are being awarded Veterans’ Performance Incentive Awards for their diligent work of providing employment and training opportunities to thousands of veterans. The three Local Workforce Development Boards being recognized for this achievement are CareerSource Central Florida, CareerSource Flagler Volusia, and CareerSource Polk.

“Florida’s workforce is better because of the valuable contributions veterans provide in a variety of careers across the state,” said Governor DeSantis. “I applaud the important work these Local Workforce Development Boards are doing to connect veterans with meaningful employment after serving our country.”

The Veterans Performance Incentive Award is awarded to Local Workforce Development Boards in three categories by local workforce development area sizes: large, medium, and small. A review committee comprised of representatives from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, CareerSource Florida, and the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training reviews the nominations and selects the awardees.

“The CareerSource Florida network is honored to help connect military veterans with rewarding careers or train for new opportunities,” said CareerSource Florida President and CEO Michelle Dennard. “On behalf of our board of directors, I extend sincere congratulations to CareerSource Central Florida, CareerSource Flagler Volusia, and CareerSource Polk for this special recognition of their innovative efforts over this past year to provide exemplary service to veterans and their families.”

“A vibrant economy with low unemployment, coupled with the lack of a state income tax and mild winters, brings many veterans and their families to Florida,” said Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs Executive Director Danny Burgess. “To
Florida Veteran Graduates From High School at Age 95

Allison Burtoft
Editor-in-Chief, Elder Update

In February 1943, Joe Perricone was finishing up his senior year of high school with his friends and family in Tampa, Florida, when he was drafted into the United States Army. He had to leave before he completed his senior year and move to Camp Blanding, near Jacksonville. Instead of crossing the stage with his classmates, Perricone traveled to England, France, Belgium, and Germany during the final months of his high school career. His high school diploma was mailed to his mother while he was serving throughout Europe. After serving in the Army for three years, he was honorably discharged in 1946. Following the war, life moved on with work, marriage, children, and eventually grandchildren, but he never got the chance to attend his graduation.

Perricone, now 95 years old, was finally able to have his dream come true as he crossed the stage and celebrated his graduation from Hillsborough High School with the class of 2019. For years, Joe Perricone told the story of missing his high school graduation to his family: a bittersweet story that was shared with grandchildren and later great-grandchildren. He wished to be deferred from being drafted long enough to attend his graduation, but he was proud to sacrifice and serve his country.

When asked how he felt when he learned that he would miss his ceremony, he said “The sacrifice I made can’t compare to all of those who served and never got to come home.” During the war, he had to leave behind his sweetheart, Hope, who attended a different high school. They were then married once he returned from the war. For many years, Joe Perricone regretted missing his chance to attend his high school graduation ceremony until his family surprised him in May 2019.

After years of hearing Joe’s story, his grandson Thomas Palermo decided it was time to give his grandfather the special moment he waited so many years for. Palermo, a circuit court judge in Hillsborough County, worked directly with Hillsborough High School’s principal, Gary Brady, to coordinate his grandfather’s graduation ceremony. He shared his grandfather’s story and photos, and walked across the stage with his grandfather during the graduation ceremony. They met with the Hillsborough High School principal before the ceremony, where Perricone was given his red cap and gown and a “Senior 2019” t-shirt. Perricone was happy his family made this day happen and described the moment of shaking Hillsborough High School principal Gary Brady’s hand and walking across the stage as “priceless.” Perricone’s family attended his ceremony and supported him throughout his journey to his graduation ceremony.

“It took 76 years, but it was worth it,” said Perricone, when asked about the experience overall. His family made a sign that said “Class of 1943” which was posted on the front of his walker. When he walked across the stage, the whole crowd stood and cheered. Perricone’s daughter, Dolores, was also with him during his walk across the stage. Perricone received his diploma like the other students, but was honored first before the other names were read. After the ceremony, Perricone stood for photos with his family, including grandchildren and great-grandchildren. “For my graduation, a lot of people worked together to surprise me to make it happen. Sometimes you make things you want to happen by doing them yourself. Sometimes it is through the love of others. Either way, now is the time if you have a goal or dream!” With help and support from his family, Perricone’s long-awaited dream finally came true, even if it was 76 years later.
Joe Perricone is an American hero with an admirable story of sacrifice for our country. His lifelong dream was something that so many people take for granted each day, and his loving family made sure that dream could come true. His story shows that it is never too late to live out your goals or dreams. When asked if he has a life motto, Perricone simply said, “I can tell you that I believe in taking one day at a time, in cherishing each moment, and loving and cherishing your family.” Joe Perricone shared love and support with many generations of his family and put their needs before his own. With patience, love, and support from his own family, he got the surprise moment he desired for so many years.
NEW VETERANS LEGAL HELPLINE AND VA MEDICAL LEGAL PARTNERSHIPS

Alexandra Srsic, Esq.
Bay Area Legal Services

Bay Area Legal Services, Inc., is a nonprofit, public interest law firm that provides civil legal assistance to low-income residents, seniors, and other vulnerable populations in the Tampa Bay region and throughout the state. For more than 50 years, Bay Area Legal has assisted low-income veterans – now more than 1,000 annually – by providing the necessary civil legal aid for them to maintain stability after their service. Specifically, through our Major General Ernest A. and Marilyn Bedke Veterans Law Center, we help veterans to get information about VA benefits, prevent homelessness for those faced with eviction or foreclosure, and advocate for veterans and their families on many other crucial legal matters.

While Bay Area Legal has served veteran clients since our inception, the firm decided several years ago that the veteran population deserved more dedicated resources. While veterans are resilient and strong, they are also a vulnerable population for many reasons. Veterans may not be aware of services or relief available to them, or they may feel that they should not ask for help. Physical and mental health factors may also impact their ability to seek and receive services. In 2016, Bay Area Legal began an initiative to expand our services to veterans. In the past three years we have been able to launch Medical Legal Partnerships (MLPs) at two nearby veterans’ hospitals – C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center and James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital – and we also have created referral partnerships with the Unarmed Services Volunteer Program, the 13th Circuit Veterans Treatment Court, and the Tampa Vet Center.

Innovative projects such as MLPs can alleviate many of the factors that negatively impact a veteran’s health and his or her ability to become self-sufficient. MLPs are designed to address the unmet legal needs of veterans by integrating civil legal aid services into existing health care services for veterans. In recognition of this important need and in furtherance of Bay Area Legal’s veteran’s initiative, Bay Area Legal worked diligently for months with the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System and the James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital to establish these partnerships.

In February 2017, after months of planning, the Bay Pines VA Medical Legal Partnership was created to provide access to legal services to veterans at the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center. In March of 2019 we were able to launch an MLP at James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital. This collaborative approach has enabled Bay Area Legal to address unmet legal needs of our veterans by providing services directly at the facility in which they receive their health care. The new legal services delivery system has established an important partnership between health and legal providers to better assist veterans in need and encourage a more holistic approach to their overall well-being and improve their quality of life.

Our newest leading-edge service for veterans is our Florida Veterans Legal Helpline. Earlier this year, as a result of having steadfast bipartisan support from around the state, we were successful in securing an appropriation from the Legislature through the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs to launch a state-wide Florida Veterans Legal Helpline. This Helpline, operated by Bay Area Legal, is modeled after our Senior Legal Helpline, which has been successfully operating for more than 10 years. Through the Florida Veterans Legal Helpline, we can reach veterans around the state and provide them with high-quality advice, brief assistance, direct representation and referral. When Bay Area Legal advocates are not able to directly provide needed services to veterans through the Helpline, we will refer them to our community partners throughout Florida. We formally partnered with Jacksonville Area Legal Aid and Legal Services of North Florida in this endeavor, and they each have a designated attorney on staff to handle extended representation cases for veterans in their respective regions of Florida.

The Florida Veterans Legal Helpline provides a convenient point of access for Florida veterans for legal issues relating to housing, family law and child support, driver’s license suspensions, disability and veterans benefits, expungement, and more. The Helpline is an additional resource, not a replacement for existing services. However, when callers are able to quickly access free legal advice or resolve their legal problem through a conference call initiated by their Helpline advocate, the nonprofit law firms in our callers’ communities can then preserve their limited resources for clients who need extended representation. Given Bay Area Legal’s unique perspective, we are often able to identify issues that impact veterans throughout the state, and then work with appropriate Legal Services partners to provide information and referrals to those affected. With the decline in funding for nonprofits, the Florida Veterans Legal Helpline aims to be a model program and a critical partner in the delivery of legal services to Florida veterans.
FINDING SOLUTIONS TO VETERAN SUICIDES REQUIRES ALL HANDS ON DECK

Miguel H. LaPuz, MD, MBA
Network Director
VA Sunshine Healthcare Network

Danny Burgess
Executive Director
Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs

Clara Reynolds, LCSW, MBA
President and CEO
Crisis Center of Tampa Bay

A disturbing number of veterans take their own lives in the U.S. On average, approximately 7,300 veterans die from suicide each year. Despite significant efforts and billions of dollars invested by the state and federal governments across the nation, suicide rates among veterans rose 26 percent from 2005 to 2016. In Florida alone, nearly 600 veterans die from suicide each year at a rate slightly higher than the national average.

Finding a solution to this public health crisis requires an aspirational, innovative, all-hands-on-deck approach – not government as usual. The VA alone cannot achieve effective or lasting reductions in the veteran suicide rate. To make a real impact, federal, state, and local providers of resources must partner together, pool resources, and coordinate care and delivery of services efficiently.

In Florida, we recognize these challenges and are taking proactive steps to break down bureaucratic barriers, working together to form a wide-ranging coalition of government and non-profit organizations that offer resources to veterans in need of our help the most – before they reach a crisis point.

We are proud to say that we are making progress on multiple fronts. This is best demonstrated through the development and growth of the Florida Veterans Support Line, 1-844-MyFLVet (693-5838). Supported by the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8), Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs, Florida Department of Children and Families, and operated by the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay, the line provides confidential emotional support and connection to community resources 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The line is available to all veterans in Florida.

Our work does not stop there. As we continue to move forward together, we are meeting and learning from communities and local organizations about how best to partner with them and leverage the resources they can provide. Likewise, we are proactively working on expanded public health initiatives to align with Presidential Executive Order 13861 “National Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End Suicide” and opportunities that may become available from the national task force.

We continue to support and promote the abundance of VA resources available to veterans to include the Veterans Crisis Line (1-800-273-8255, press 1). Like the Florida Veterans Support Line, the Veterans Crisis Line provides confidential emotional support and connection to community resources 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The line is available to all veterans in Florida.

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Thanking Ombudsman Veterans

DONNA HOLDEN
Teresa Lindstamer
Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

Air Force Veteran Donna Holden of the South Central District became certified with the Ombudsman Program in December 2017, and although she is relatively new, you would never have guessed it! She is so intense in her advocacy that she was named South Central District’s “Ombudsman of the Year” for 2018.

Ms. Holden brings to her volunteer position these qualities: seasoned experience in the long-term care field, professionalism, and a passion for those in need of someone to speak up for them. She invested nearly 200 hours at one facility advocating for improved standards for those residents. She also volunteered a total of 399.5 hours in 2017-2018, which was her first year as an Ombudsman, and she received the Silver Service Presidential Award.

District Chair Lee Earls nominated Ms. Holden for the Ombudsman of the Year award and stated, “She serves as an inspiration to all Ombudsmen for the power of our advocacy and the patience it sometimes requires.”

Ms. Holden consistently goes above and beyond while assisting residents. Last year, she helped a new resident who was displaced by Hurricane Irma. She got the resident’s cell phone working, encouraged the resident to participate in activities including shopping outings, and even checked with county authorities to see whether the resident’s home had been condemned following the hurricane. As a result of her tireless pursuit to improve the quality of life for this resident, the resident was able to contact friends and neighbors, visit the former home regularly, go shopping, participate in activities, and appoint a new power of attorney. Because of Ms. Holden’s efforts, the resident is very content living in a new home!

Thank you, Donna Holden, for all your work with the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, and thank you for your U.S. military service.

RAYMOND SULLIVAN
Michael Phillips
Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

Ombudsman volunteer Captain Raymond “Sully” Sullivan has a highly decorated military background.

Sully joined the Navy in January 1958 and was an enlisted aviation metalsmith for four years. He was selected to attend U.S. Naval Flight Training in October 1960 at Naval Air Station Pensacola in Florida.

He graduated with his Wings of Gold in April 1962 from U.S. Naval Air Station New Iberia in Louisiana, and was assigned to Anti-Submarine Squadron 39 in Quonset Point, Rhode Island, flying the S2D Tracker aircraft from USS Essex CVS 9 from 1962 to 1965 where he also became a landing signal officer.

With that designation, he was assigned to Training Squadron 5 in Pensacola and trained fledgling pilots to land aboard the aircraft carrier USS Lexington CVT 16. After two years, he was selected as VT5 "Instructor of the Year" and transitioned to jet aircraft at VT4 Naval Air Station Pensacola and further assigned to Attack Squadron VA 165 at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island.

He flew in the Vietnam War as an attack pilot from 1968 to 1970, and he was then assigned to the Naval Postgraduate School and obtained a BA degree in international relations and foreign affairs. He was reassigned to Naval Air Station Whidbey Island flying EA6B Prowler aircraft and was selected for Command in Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron 137, where he achieved his arrested landing number 1000 on USS Ranger. After completion, he became the navigation officer on USS Midway CVA 41 in Yokosuka, Japan, then to executive officer on USS Lexington CVT 16, then to assignment at the Pentagon, and selection as Commander, Naval Air Station Key West in Florida.

Upon completion, he served in various units, to include the Task Group Commander, 7th Fleet Staff coordinating group, at which time he also served in the First Desert War against Iraq. Soon after, he retired in 1992.

He then earned a master’s degree in management, and a master’s degree in counseling and psychology from Troy University. After 12 years of counseling children in the Santa Rosa County K12 school system, he became a volunteer in the Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program in the Northwest District six years ago.

You might think that someone with such a distinguished, high ranking military background would be very regimented in his demeanor — not Sully. He’s the most affable, easygoing, big-hearted person you could hope to meet. However, when it comes to protecting the rights of residents in the facilities he oversees for the ombudsman program, he defends them with the same determination and tenacity with which he defended his country for 34 years. He loves his residents and will do anything for them. What a guy!

Thank you, Sully, for your service in the U.S. Military and for your dedication to residents overseen by the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.
Local Council SUCCESS STORIES

The dedicated volunteers of the Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program were asked to share local stories highlighting how a resident was helped by their work. The stories, submitted from all over the state, are bound together by residents who have a better quality of life and increased quality of care due, in part, to the dedicated efforts of volunteer ombudsmen.

SOUTHWEST
After a facility closed, the residents were relocated to a new facility and stopped receiving their monthly Personal Needs Allowance of $54 each. The local ombudsman spoke with the administrator and advocated for the residents to receive their money. The ombudsman’s efforts resulted in the facility distributing Personal Needs Allowances to residents, including the amounts owed from previous months.


TREASURE COAST
A resident’s family member regularly informed facility staff about an ongoing problem of the resident’s clothing disappearing. Eventually, the resident had no personal clothing remaining. The local ombudsman arranged for a meeting with the administrator, the resident’s family member, and staff to review laundry processes and attempt to locate the missing clothing. After the clothing was not found, the ombudsman recommended that residents’ clothing be added to inventory lists in residents’ records. The ombudsman also recommended that staff receive additional training about respecting residents’ belongings and privacy. The ombudsman’s advocacy resulted in the facility establishing new policies and procedures to track residents’ clothing. With the new tracking system in place, reports of missing clothing declined.

Treasure Coast Council: Picture Unavailable

FIRST COAST
A family member attended a funeral and sent flowers to the event on behalf of a resident at the resident’s request. Later, facility staff would not allow the resident to reimburse the funeral expenses with their Personal Needs Allowance money. The local ombudsman advocated for the resident’s right to control how their money is spent. The resident was then able to reimburse their family member.

Take a Moment to Enjoy Florida's State Parks

Susan Beason
Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Take a break from your routine – or the holiday rush – with a visit to any of Florida’s 175 state parks and trails. Regardless of age or ability, visitors will find opportunities to enjoy and explore Florida’s unique natural beauty and cultural heritage.

Florida State Parks span nearly 800,000 acres and include forests, springs, and 100 miles of white sand beaches. Whichever park you’re interested in, the park service website, FloridaStateParks.org, has all you need to know.

You can search for an individual park and see everything it has to offer. You also can search statewide for a specific experience or amenity, such as picnicking or historic sites. The park events page is regularly updated with the guided tours and other special events offered year-round by staff and volunteers.

Research confirms that spending time in nature helps people feel healthier and more engaged in life. Whether you’re active or relaxing in the shade, parks can improve your mood. Perhaps the companionship of your pet would make the day even better.

Well-behaved domestic pets on a handheld leash are allowed in designated day-use areas and in campgrounds at most Florida State Parks. Call the individual park to learn more or go online.

Many state parks have plenty of options for camping. Full-facility sites for RVs and tent campers include electricity, water, grills, and other options.

A 50 percent discount on the base camping fee is available to Florida residents who are at least age 65, or Florida residents possessing a current Social Security disability award certificate, or a 100 percent disability award certificate from the federal government.

Working as a park volunteer is a great way to boost your sense of well-being and engagement with your community. Volunteers – both individuals and groups – are integral to the Florida State Parks team. Whether you’re greeting visitors or tackling a project, your work can benefit the park and the community. Visit the volunteer portal, volunteers.floridastateparks.org, to learn more and register.

The park service is committed to providing all visitors with equal access to facilities and programs. Everyone is encouraged to enjoy the beauty and experiences found in Florida State Parks.
Safely Navigate the "Internet of Things"

Office Of Inspector General
Florida Department Of Elder Affairs

The year is 2019, where everything, from refrigerators and washing machines to lightbulbs, vacuums, and coffee mugs, can be connected to the internet. Since there is no end in sight to emerging technology created to connect with others and make our lives easier, being familiar with ways to protect yourself is more critical now than ever.

Here are some tips to help you navigate the “Internet of Things” safely:

Never share passwords. This cannot be stated enough. Most people use their dog’s name, children’s names, favorite sports teams, or believe it or not “password” as passwords. Passwords don’t have to be long for them to be secure; they just need to be complex. For example, take the phrase “You Can’t Teach an Old Dog New Tricks.” Using the first letters of each word “YCTAODNT” creates a complex password that is not easily guessed. You could take it a step further by changing letters to numbers, using some lower-case letters, or adding symbols. Now, the password might look something like this, “ycT@0dNt.” Whatever method or idiom you choose to create your passwords, make sure it’s something you can remember. There are a multitude of password manager apps available to help you keep track. Also remember, never use the same password for more than one site.

Don’t answer calls from unknown numbers. We’ve all received them. It doesn’t take long for a scammer to find a phone number of someone. They call at all hours of the day and night. How many people answer calls from unknown numbers? With the rise in robocalls, scammers can easily record responses from their victims to authorize payments or other charges over the telephone. The best practice to keep yourself from being victim is to let the unknown numbers go to voicemail; if the person has valuable information, they will leave a message. If you do answer an unknown number and hear a robocall, hang up.

Shred important documents or choose electronic statements. Most people don’t consider the possibility of someone rummaging through their trash to find information. Identity thieves can steal bank account and/or credit card information, and other financial information from documents thrown in trash cans. It’s a good practice to shred any financial documentation or bills that are to be discarded. Fraud experts recommend using a cross-cut shredder, which cuts the paper into smaller pieces.

Watch what you share on social media and revealing your location. Staying connected with family and friends has become much easier with the creation of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media platforms. With so much access to information, social media can also be prime hunting for scammers, hackers, and thieves. Be careful of the information you share on social media. Things such as payment information, birthdays, addresses (home and work), and phone numbers provide scammers a lot of information about their victims. Also, be aware of sharing or “checking in” to your location. Such actions make thieves aware that you’re not at home and might not be for an extended amount of time.

Source: AARP Bulletin, April 2019, Vol. 60/No. 3
This year’s DOEA Profile of Older Floridians (Profiles) has received a considerable update compared to previous years. The Profiles tell a story about the older adult population of Florida.

This information is divided into different sections that are organized around key themes: demographics, finances, livability, health and medical resources, and disaster preparedness. Profiles are available at the county, Planning and Service Area (PSA), and state level and can help organizations improve the lives of the older adult population of Florida.

The Profiles are divided into six sections. The first section is the Elder Needs Index (ENI), which helps to indicate seniors’ overall level of risk for needing social services within a geographic area. The ENI is a composite measure presented in map form that includes the following: (1) the percentage of the 60 and older population that is age 85 and older; (2) the percentage of the 55 and older population that are members of racial or ethnic minority groups; (3) the percentage of the 65 and older population with one or more disabilities; and (4) the percentage of the 55 and older population living below 125 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. Higher ENI values, represented by darker colors on the map, indicate overall level of risk for social services for older adults within a geographic area.

The demographic profile provides a breakdown of the area’s population for those age 60 and older, such as the racial/ethnic composition, educational attainment, English proficiency, etc. It also examines specific traits of older Floridians, such as the number of veterans, voters, and drivers.

The third section is a financial profile to examine financial conditions, such as poverty rates and the cost-of-living for older Floridians.

The fourth section is the livability profile. This section provides information on the access older adults have to resources in their neighborhoods that can help keep them connected with their social networks and the broader community.

The fifth section provides information on the health and medical resources of Florida elders, with a focus on the variety and availability of different types of facilities, medical professionals, and treatment services in a community.

Finally, the sixth section is on disaster preparedness, which outlines the number of people in evacuation zones, availability of shelter resources, and disaster-specific issues, such as the number of older adults who are at particular risk during a power outage.

An example of a major change to this year’s Profiles, illustrated below, is the addition of population pyramids. Population pyramids were created at the county, PSA, and state level. The population pyramid below compares the projected population by gender between 2018 and 2030 for the entire state of Florida, demonstrating the changes expected in the next decade. Florida, as a whole, is expected to experience population growth, with several areas expecting notable growth in the proportion of those age 65 and older. When a population pyramid looks like an upside-down pyramid, it illustrates that there are more seniors than those in younger age categories. Over the next twelve years, the state will experience growth in the 60 and older population at a higher rate than those who are under age 20.

To assist with the interpretation of the Profiles, each section now provides a summary of the important information on the topic. A User’s Guide has also been developed to showcase best practices and explain certain concepts in more detail. Further, all profiles have been made compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other style improvements have been incorporated to increase readability.

For more information on the Profiles, please contact the Bureau of Planning and Evaluation. To view the Department Profiles, you may visit elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/info_stats.php.
TOP NASA MANAGER...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

made that speech, us guys said, 'That guy knows what he’s talking about!’"

Still, right from the start, working on the Redstone rocket program, Rigell knew he was doing something historic. He described every launch as being “white-knuckle moments,” but naturally the stakes grew significantly higher as the race intensified to land on the moon.

"Back at that time we were in the race with Russia to go to the moon, and they had some word that the Russians were able to fly around the moon and not land," Rigell said. "(Apollo Program Director) Rocco Petrone called several of us in the spacecraft launch vehicle and said here’s what HQ wants to do. Apollo 8 was only going to be a low earth orbit flight to test the first lunar module. With Rocco, it wasn’t a question as to what we were going to do, he’d be nice to you. He knew what we were going to say. We wanted that challenge."

Rigell worked throughout Apollo and into the shuttle program, retiring in 1991. He was always disappointed that further moon landings did not occur after the Apollo program. He said putting a man into orbit after landing on the moon was kind of like "Columbus coming here and nobody follows him.”

"Someday we’re going to extend it millions and millions (of miles) to Mars. I think that’s coming. I don’t know when; it won’t be in my lifetime,” he said. “I think since the history of mankind, man has always looked with awe and wonder at the stars.”

To read more profiles from Florida Today’s special series, the People of Apollo, visit floridatoday.com/moonlanding.

VETERANS’ AFFAIRS...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Support Line, veterans can call to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, even if they are not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care.

So, what can you do to help? First, add the Veterans Crisis Line and Florida Veterans Support Line to your mobile phone contacts. Second, share the numbers with others and ask them to do the same.

Third, visit visn8.va.gov/savealife.asp to download and share outreach materials. Be there for veterans and active duty service members who may be in crisis. Listen to what they say, ask the hard questions, and assist them with connecting with VA and other important community resources. Be the difference and be there for a veteran in crisis.
Johnston has a long list of proteges who have ventured into the “Joe Dome,” a pole vaulting training facility he has constructed on his property in Central Florida.

“Once you know Gary, you realize his bucket list is pretty long,” Johnston said. “He shows up the first time weighing 260 pounds, and I said, ‘We’ve got a challenge, but let’s go.’ He’s very strong and the weight loss has allowed him to improve his technique and learn a more efficient way to pole vault. He lives for it. He’s a very interesting guy who’s into a lot of stuff.”

Besides trying something different on his own, Perigo is trying something different in the Lake Senior Games in 2020. He wants to take advantage of residing in what he calls the “Triathlon Capital of the World.” Lake County and Clermont have been successfully running triathlons for 40 years, he claims.

In a first for Florida Senior Games Local Series Qualifiers, the Lake Senior Games will have a sprint triathlon in 2020 with a 400-meter swim in open water, a 20K cycling road race, and a 5K road race.

“Clermont has the cleanest lakes in the state for the open water swim, and hills and countryside for the biking and running,” he says. “The Great Floridian Triathlon has been going on for nearly 30 years.”

It’s Perigo’s goal to put on good events for folks not only to have fun and compete but to find a new way of life around like minded people.

“I’m doing something to help others out,” he says. “It’s about the community, getting people together, and enjoying the lifestyle.”

Because of Gary Perigo’s efforts, the Lake County community is coming together and enjoying the lifestyle.

The 2019 Florida Senior Games, presented by Humana, to be held December 6-15 in the Greater Fort Lauderdale area, is accepting online registration for its 24 sports and events until November 17. Entry fees vary by sport. Volunteer opportunities are also available for the 10-day event at a variety of sports and locations in Broward County. For more information, visit floridaseniorgames.com.
Information and referrals for elder services are available through the Elder Helpline within each county. For the deaf or speech impaired, all Elder Helplines can be accessed through the Florida Relay by dialing 711 from anywhere in Florida.

Florida Area Agencies on Aging (Counties Served)

Northwest Florida
Area Agency on Aging, Inc.
5090 Commerce Park Circle
Pensacola, FL 32505
850-494-7101
(Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton Counties)

Advantage Aging Solutions
2414 Mahan Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32308
850-488-0055
(Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla and Washington Counties)

Elder Options
100 SW 75th Street, #301
Gainesville, FL 32607
352-378-6649
(Alachua, Bradford, Citrus, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Lafayette, Lake, Levy, Marion, Putnam, Sumter, Suwannee and Union Counties)

ElderSource
10688 Old St. Augustine Road
Jacksonville, FL 32257
904-391-6600
(Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, St. Johns and Volusia Counties)

Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc.
9549 Koger Boulevard North
Gadsden Building, Suite 100
St. Petersburg, FL 33702
727-570-9696
(Pasco and Pinellas Counties)

Senior Connection Center, Inc.
8928 Brittany Way Tampa, FL 33619
813-740-3888
(Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee and Polk Counties)

Senior Resource Alliance
3319 Maquire Boulevard, Suite 100
Orlando, FL 32803
407-514-1800
(Brevard, Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties)

Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida
15201 N. Cleveland Avenue,
Suite 1100
North Fort Myers, FL 33903
239-652-6900
(Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Lee and Sarasota Counties)

Your Aging and Disability Resource Center
4400 North Congress Avenue
West Palm Beach, FL 33407
561-684-5885
(Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach and St. Lucie Counties)

Aging and Disability Resource Center of Broward County, Inc.
5300 Hiatus Road
Sunrise, FL 33351
954-745-9567
(Broward County)

Alliance for Aging, Inc.
760 NW 107th Avenue, Suite 214
Miami, FL 33172
305-670-6500
(Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties)

Information & Referral:
1-800-96-ELDER
(1-800-963-5337)

FLORIDA ELDER HELPLINE DIRECTORY

Please call the telephone number below in your area for information and referrals.

Alachua ............. 800-262-2243
Baker ................ 888-242-4464
Bay .................. 866-467-4624
Bradford ............. 800-262-2243
Brevard .............. 407-514-0019
Broward ............. 954-745-9579
Calhoun .............. 866-467-4624
Charlotte ............ 866-413-5337
Citrus ................ 800-262-2243
Clay .................. 888-242-4464
Collier ............... 866-413-5337
Columbia ............. 800-262-2243
DeSoto ............... 866-413-5337
Dixie .................. 800-262-2243
Duval ................. 888-242-4464
Escambia .............. 866-531-8011
Flagler ............... 888-242-4464
Franklin ............. 866-467-4624
Gadsden .............. 866-467-4624
Gilchrist ............. 800-262-2243
Glades ............... 866-413-5337
Gulf .................. 866-467-4624
Harmon ................ 800-262-2243
Hardee ............... 800-336-2226
Hendry ............... 866-413-5337
Hernando ............. 800-262-2243
Highlands ............ 800-336-2226
Hillsborough ......... 800-336-2226
Holmes ................ 866-467-4624
Indian River .......... 866-684-5885
Jackson ............... 866-467-4624
Jefferson ............ 866-467-4624
Lafayette ............. 800-262-2243
Lake .................. 800-262-2243
Lee ..................... 866-413-5337
Leon ................... 866-467-4624
Levy .................. 800-262-2243
Liberty ............... 866-467-4624
Manatee ............. 800-336-2226
Marion ................ 800-262-2243
Martin ............... 866-684-5885
Miami-Dade .......... 305-670-4357
Monroe ............... 305-670-4357
Nassau ............... 888-242-4464
Okaloosa ............. 866-531-8011
Okeechobee .......... 866-684-5885
Orange ............... 407-514-0019
Osceola ............... 407-514-0019
Palm Beach ........... 866-684-5885
Pasco ................. 727-217-8111
Pinellas ............... 727-217-8111
Polk .................. 800-336-2226
Putnam ............... 800-262-2243
Santa Rosa ........... 866-531-8011
Sarasota ............. 866-413-5337
Seminole ............. 407-514-0019
St. Johns ............... 888-242-4464
St. Lucie ............. 866-684-5885
Sumter ............... 800-262-2243
Suwannee ............. 800-262-2243
Taylor ................. 866-467-4624
Union ................ 800-262-2243
Volusia ............... 888-242-4464
Wakulla ............... 866-467-4624
Washington ........... 866-531-8011

Elder Helpline Can Assist Non-English Speakers

By calling the Elder Helpline, Florida’s elders can access information and referral services through a translation service. Telephone interpreters provide live, on-the-line assistance by translating from English into as many as 148 different languages.

Are you worried that an elder relative or friend may be the victim of abuse? You can report known or suspected cases of abuse by calling Florida’s Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).
Older Driver Safety Awareness Week

Take Control of Your Transportation Future

Gail M. Holley
Florida Department of Transportation

Transportation is a part of our everyday life, whether going to the store, visiting friends and family, or taking a walk at your local park. Everyone has somewhere to be and a preferred way to get there; however, as our bodies change with age, so do our driving needs and abilities. Thanks to the many resources available, you can confidently plan a life where you have access to a variety of transportation options to get around your community.

This December, the Florida Safe Mobility for Life Coalition will once again support the American Occupational Therapy Association’s (AOTA) national Older Driver Safety Awareness Week (December 2 – 6, 2019). The goal is to promote a conversation to help you remain active in your community whether driving, walking, biking, or riding transit. Each day during the week, the following topics will be covered:

**MONDAY**  Anticipating Changes That Can Affect Driving

**TUESDAY**  Family Conversations

**WEDNESDAY**  Screening and Evaluations With an Occupational Therapist

**THURSDAY**  Interventions That Can Empower Drivers and Families

**FRIDAY**  Staying Engaged in the Community With or Without a Car

Florida’s Safe Mobility for Life Coalition is developing and supporting various events and activities throughout this week to help you achieve safe mobility for life. You can participate in the following ways:

- Order and read Florida’s Guide to Safe Mobility for Life to get all the information you need to understand the impact aging has on driving; be proactive about safe driving skill; and plan for a safe transition from driving. To order Florida’s Guide to Safe Mobility for Life, please write, call, or email us at the following address:
  » Safe Mobility for Life Resource Center
  PO Box 3061121
  Tallahassee, FL 32306
  Phone: 850-644-8426
  Email: contact@safemobilityfl.com
  Submit your request to fdot.tips/orderform

- Complete the worksheets in the Guide to help develop and put your own transportation plan into action.

- Talk to your health care provider if you have concerns about how the natural age-related changes or your medications can affect your safe driving skills.

- Learn your available transportation options at FindaRideFlorida.org.

- Attend a CarFit safety event or driver safety course. You can view a list of available events at SafeMobilityFL.com/#CommunityEvents.

Whether you walk, bike, ride transit, or tackle your day-to-day life from behind the wheel, you have the keys to your transportation future. Florida’s Safe Mobility for Life Coalition is here to help you stay safe, maintain independence, and remain active in your community during Older Driver Safety Awareness Week and beyond.

Above: Older adults embrace alternative transportation options, such as riding their local HART bus in Tampa, Florida.