

# THE BRIDGE

NEW PORT  
RICHEY  
CLASSIC. FLORIDA. CURRENT.

cityofnewportrichey.org

18th Edition | March 2025

## Chasco Fiesta:

CULTURE & COMMUNITY CELEBRATED IN NEW PORT RICHEY



THEN

<  
The first  
Chasco Fiesta  
in 1922  
(photo courtesy  
of the West Pasco  
Historical Society)



NOW

<  
Krewe of  
Chasco, the  
2024 winners  
of the Roger  
Michaels Float  
Excellence  
Award

Check Out!  
Some of this year's  
festivities on page 5!

► In 1922, two years before New Port Richey received its official charter, the first Chasco Fiesta was born of the imagination of one of the city's early champions, Gerben DeVries. He found a scroll, he claimed, within a clay cylinder along the Pithlachascotee River's banks. On that scroll was a tale recounting the experiences of a Spanish girl and boy, captured and raised by a Calusa tribe in the late 1800s. The pair was accepted into the tribe and later were named "King Pithla" and "Queen Chasco." Many initially accepted the legend as fact; however, DeVries ultimately disclosed that he had fabricated the tale himself.

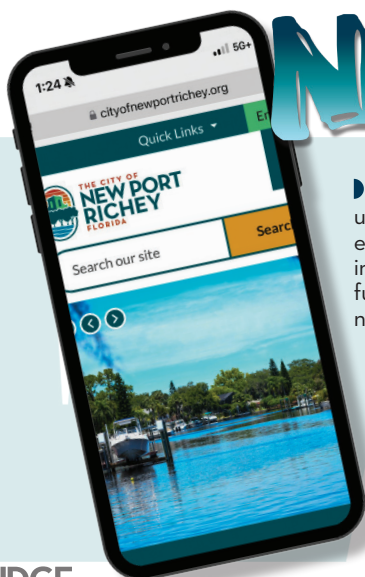
"He looked at what Tampa had done with the story of José Gaspar and the already-successful Gasparilla Pirate Festival, which had started about 18 years earlier," says Cami Austin, Chasco Fiesta Chairperson who has been associated with the

festival for over three decades. "In this new city, with very little history of its own, he realized that he could make up his own story to attract visitors to New Port Richey, which was crucial back in its earliest days."

The festival's initial purpose was as humble as it was ambitious – to raise funds for a new and permanent library. Now, 103 years later, Chasco Fiesta remains a pillar of the community. And while it has evolved in many ways, it preserves certain elements that honor its legacy.

"As New Port Richey evolves, so does the festival," adds Billie Bikakis, Event Director of the 2025 Chasco Fiesta.

“Blending the traditional with the contemporary is what I think will keep Chasco alive for another century.”



## NEW website

► We are thrilled to announce the launch of our all-new, user-friendly website, crafted to provide an easier, more enjoyable experience when accessing services and information. With a more modern design and improved functionality, the city's website is designed to meet the needs of our growing community. Whether you're a resident, business owner, or visitor, this platform makes finding resources, learning about events, and staying connected simpler than ever before.

By combining an intuitive layout with regularly updated content, we aim to keep you informed and inspired. This initiative reflects our commitment to fostering a more connected, informed, and thriving community.



Scan QR  
Code and  
view our new  
website!

We encourage you to explore the site and discover its many features. Whether you're searching for local events, seeking information about city services, or simply curious about what's happening in the city, our website is here to help.

# CITY MANAGER'S LETTER

Dear Neighbors,

As we embrace 2025, it is my privilege to share exciting updates about celebrations and recent projects.

There has been tremendous reason to celebrate this past year. We celebrated 100 years with a year-long Centennial Celebration which culminated with one big weekend event in Sims Park, where we showcased the city's first-ever drone show. Our community also came together to celebrate the holidays, with the Christmas Street Parade, Light Up the Night Tree Lighting in Sims Park, and an inaugural New Year's Eve Ball Drop in Railroad Square.

The city's downtown has enjoyed the benefit of several new establishments opening their doors for business. Please see page 3 for detailed information about new businesses coming to the city. Our businesses certainly enrich our local economy and they also strengthen the sense of connection and community that makes New Port Richey so special.

In reviewing the newsletter, I hope you'll join me in congratulating the employees at the William C. Maytum Water Treatment Plant for coining the "Outstanding Water Treatment Plant" award from Treatment Plant Operator Magazine. It can be stated that the dedicated staff have worked hard to earn the award and deserve much praise for having done so.

The City of New Port Richey kicked off 2025 with the launch of a brand-new website. The redesign is focused on providing an accessible, user-friendly experience. Please visit [www.CityofNewPortRichey.org](http://www.CityofNewPortRichey.org) to explore the updated site.

Thank you to everyone who has played a part in these accomplishments - our dedicated city staff, local business owners, and every resident who contributes to the vitality of New Port Richey. Together, we are building a brighter, stronger future for all.

Warm regards,

Debbie L. Manns, ICMA-CM  
City Manager



# 2025 MUNICIPAL ELECTION



The City of New Port Richey's Municipal Election will be held on Tuesday, April 8th. All registered voters of the City of New Port Richey will have the opportunity to elect two people to serve as City Council members.

Residents who wish to participate in the upcoming Municipal Election, but will not be in the city to vote on Election Day, may vote by absentee ballot commencing on March 5th at the City Clerk's office, Second Floor, City Hall, 5919 Main Street, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday until Monday, April 7th.

Voters must reside within the corporate limits of the City of New Port Richey to participate in this election. All voting on Election Day shall take place from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the New Port Richey Recreation and Aquatic Center, located at 6630 Van Buren Street.



## CITIZENS ACADEMY

Engage \* Educate \* Empower

### Citizens Academy Returns this Fall

Learning how a city operates is beneficial for all its residents. When you join our Citizens Academy program, you gain firsthand insight into the inner workings of our local government, empowering you to become a more engaged participant in the future of our community.

"Attending the Citizens Academy was a wonderful learning experience. Local city government affects my life the most, and I'm thankful I got the opportunity to learn more about how our city operates. From maintaining infrastructure to budgeting, safety, and the CRA, I gained a great deal of knowledge and met a few new friends along the way." - Robert Perry, 2024 Spring Academy Graduate

The 2025 Fall Citizens Academy is a nine-week course, and the application period will open in late summer.

## New Port Richey Public Library Kick Starts Lifelong Reading



The New Port Richey Public Library advocates for lifelong literacy, and it's never too early to start! The library hosts several reading challenges year-round for all ages. Some last only a season, while others keep participants reading throughout the entire year.

Three of the ongoing programs help inspire a love of reading at an early age and keep students motivated all the way up through high school - 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten, 500 Books Before Middle School, and 100 Books Before Graduation offer incentives to readers as they reach certain benchmarks, spurring them on to reach that final goal.

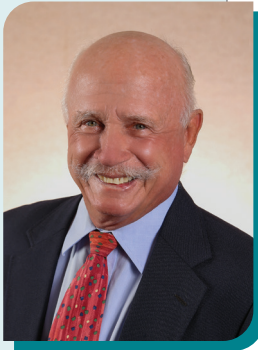
In December, the library gave special congratulations to the most-recent graduates of each challenge, with a total of seven students being recognized at a City Council meeting. Each reader received a certificate and the opportunity to select a brand-new book of their choosing to keep as their prize. Many are already onto the next challenge!

To learn more about available reading challenges or to register, visit [nprlibrary.beanstack.org](http://nprlibrary.beanstack.org) or download the Beanstack app.

# MAYOR'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

As we move forward toward Spring, we invite our residents and welcome visitors to our beautiful city to celebrate events like the Chasco Fiesta in March, Family Movie Nights, and the Concerts in the Park series in Sims Park. I encourage you to not only attend local events and support our local businesses, but to actively engage with your community, whether that's through volunteering for local events and important initiatives, or participating in programs at our Public Library.



Our Public Library is consistently reaching out and working with the local community, and I hope you will join us in celebrating one of their latest endeavors, the city's local youth's reading accomplishments, on page 2.

Our city thrives when our residents are engaged and active in shaping its future. This is an opportunity for me to remind you that the 2025 Municipal Election is just around the corner, taking place on Tuesday, April 8th. On this day, we will elect two City Council members who will play an essential role in guiding our community forward.

Your voice matters, and voting is one of the most impactful ways to make it heard. If you're unable to cast your vote on Election Day, you can still participate by voting absentee. Absentee voting is available at the City Clerk's office commencing on March 5th, located on the second floor of City Hall at 5919 Main Street. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with absentee voting available until Monday, April 7th. Please find more details regarding the upcoming election on page 2.

This year, let's move forward continually working together to ensure our community remains a vibrant place to live, work, and play.

Sincerely,

Chopper Davis  
Mayor



# NEW BUSINESSES

Our downtown area is thriving, with new businesses opening their doors and creating new opportunities for everyone in town. Please consider supporting the following businesses:

## WHAT'S NEW?

### • Get Hooked

With their own fishing fleet, and strong partnerships with local commercial fishing captains, Get Hooked ensures that every dish they serve is crafted with the finest, locally-sourced ingredients. Located at 5546 Main Street.



### • Gulf Shore Décor

Gulf Shore Décor offers high-end décor items, jewelry, furniture, and accessories, as well as very reasonable home décor items. Located at 6214 Grand Boulevard.



### • Hudson Art and Décor

Hudson Art & Décor offers nautical-themed art and décor, handcrafted furniture, craft items, and clothing. Located at 6216 Grand Boulevard.



### • PHD Wholesaler Jewelry

With experience in the jewelry industry since 1979, PHD Wholesaler Jewelry specializes in providing wholesale prices to all. Located at 5500 Main Street Suite 108 in Stonehaven at Main Street Plaza.



## WHAT'S NEXT?

### • Ela!

Ela! will be an all-new Greek-Cypriot Restaurant located at 6238 Grand Boulevard in the former Rose's Bistro off Main across the street from Richey Suncoast Theatre. The restaurant will open in Spring 2025.



## Special Shoutout: THE ESTUARY

The Estuary was recognized as one of the Tampa Bay Times Top 30 restaurants in 2024! We are honored to have them in our downtown, and we hope you will stop by to try their acclaimed menu.



# Water Treatment Plant Earns 'Outstanding Water Treatment Plant' Award



The Water Treatment Plant pictured is located at 9748 Decubellis Road.

The William C. Maytum Water Treatment Plant was recently featured in an article in Treatment Plant Operator Magazine. The article highlights the five-person crew that manages the water plant and celebrates the Award-Winning work of the team. While they had originally applied for "Most Improved Water Treatment Plant," it was a pleasant surprise that they were instead honored with the prestigious "Outstanding Water Treatment Plant" award.

The five-person team includes: Water Production Supervisor Greg Wikholm; Lead Operator Michael Stein; Operator Devin Ammiano; Operator Daniel Robertson; and Trainee Andrew Smith.

As shared in the article, the crew consistently outperforms state and federal standards. They also credit the crew with rejuvenating, maintaining, and modernizing the city's water plant, as well as assisting other public works departments.

Their dedicated team is on a mission to ensure the plant remains at the forefront of water treatment excellence.

**"We have a group of dedicated professionals at the city's water treatment plant," said Robert Rivera, Public Works Director. "Their priority is to supply city residents with the safest drinking water possible."**



**Apr. 21 – Walk & Talk Club: Extra Mile**  
Join us for a tree walk downtown and learn about our area's trees and their impact on the city.

**Apr. 21 – Composting 101**  
Learn about the basics of composting, the city's compost program, and why it's beneficial.

**Apr. 22 – Plant-Based Cooking Demonstration with Chef Warren**

**Apr. 24 – Eating Local Produce**  
Tanner Kauffman from Theo's Harvest will give a talk on the importance of eating locally-grown produce.

**Apr. 25 – Riverside Concert Series featuring The Garbage-Men**  
This band creates every instrument out of—you guessed it—garbage! Enjoy the musical sounds of cereal-box guitars, bucket drums, and more.



# Employee Spotlight:

## Sgt. Matthew Patsch

Sgt. Matthew Patsch stands out for his exemplary work as Sergeant of the LIFT Unit for the City of New Port Richey. Not only is he passionate about his role, he consistently expresses empathy and emotional intelligence in his work.

Sgt. Patsch's career in law enforcement spans 15 years, beginning in Pinellas County as an officer in the patrol unit, and later working his way up through the ranks at Indian Shores Police Department.

Patsch joined the City of New Port Richey in 2019 as police officer assigned to the patrol division, and later he was promoted to Field Training Officer, responsible for training incoming recruits. Sgt. Patsch has always been passionate about the educational side of his duties, and he uses his previous certified instructor experience to assist with teaching the agency's personnel in various topics.

He has since been promoted to the rank of Corporal, and then Sergeant, within the patrol division. Later on, he was called upon to form the agency's newest unit, the Life Improvement Facilitation Team (LIFT), established in 2023.

He has received a national certificate to teach Mental Health First Aid, as well as a certificate to teach Racial Intelligence (RITE), which he has used to certify all agency personnel.

"Sgt. Patsch is a standout leader within the department, embodying the values of integrity, professionalism, and community service," said Lt. Joseph Pascalli, Patsch's supervisor.

The LIFT Unit was created to assist those experiencing homelessness, drug addiction, and mental health crisis. The Unit strives to help these citizens regain their sense of self by listening to their stories, their goals, and their plans for recovery. Sgt. Patsch is on the frontlines of this effort, directly communicating with and connecting citizens to resources that will help with their transition.

**"I am proud to be a part of this team and to have helped build this Unit," said Patsch. "We treat everyone as a someone."**

Sgt. Patsch has recently transitioned out of the LIFT Unit to help the agency meet an important goal. Named the agency's Accreditation Manager, he will assist with the accreditation process for the agency to become accredited through the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation (FCA).

In his free time, Sgt. Patsch enjoys spending time with his family, and he loves being outdoors playing golf, fishing, or hiking.

**If you've had an outstanding interaction with a city employee, please share your feedback.**

To share your feedback, please email comments to [wharranb@cityofnewportrichey.org](mailto:wharranb@cityofnewportrichey.org).

# Spring Neighborhood Clean-up Day

The City of New Port Richey will host the Spring Neighborhood Clean-Up Day Saturday, May 17th from 8:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. This bi-annual event allows residents to dispose of unwanted items in dumpsters rented by the city. Residents may take their unwanted items to either one of two locations to properly dispose of them.

**DUMPSTERS WILL BE PLACED AT THE FOLLOWING PROPERTIES:**

- Frances Avenue Park off of Louisiana Avenue
- Old River Road Church Property at 6131 South River Road
  - Non-working, undamaged TVs and Computer Monitors/Towers will be accepted at this location.
  - Paper shredding will also be available at this location and limited to four boxes per household.

Residents may also contact the New Port Richey Public Works Department at 727.841.4536 for additional information. Driver's licenses showing proof of residency within the city limits will be required for drop off at both locations.



**Materials Allowed:**

- Glass • Wood (8' or less) • Drywall • Fence
- Undamaged TVs/Computers • Carpet
- House Furniture • Mattress • Plywood
- Paint • Light bulbs • Batteries • Old Chemicals

**Materials NOT Allowed:**

- Yard Debris • Broken Televisions
- Cement/Concrete • Residential Waste (Food)

## YOUR CITY COUNCIL



**Mayor, Chopper Davis**  
[Davisc@cityofnewportrichey.org](mailto:Davisc@cityofnewportrichey.org)



**Deputy Mayor, Kelly Mothershead**  
[Mothersheadk@cityofnewportrichey.org](mailto:Mothersheadk@cityofnewportrichey.org)



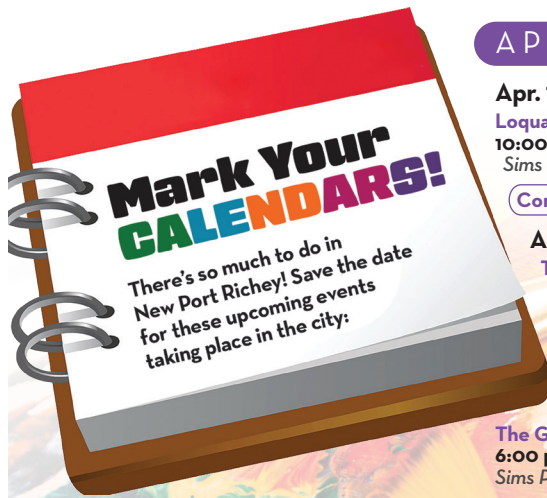
**Councilman, Matt Murphy**  
[Murphyrm@cityofnewportrichey.org](mailto:Murphyrm@cityofnewportrichey.org)



**Councilman, Peter Altman**  
[Altmanp@cityofnewportrichey.org](mailto:Altmanp@cityofnewportrichey.org)



**Councilman, Bertell Butler, IV**  
[Butlerb@cityofnewportrichey.org](mailto:Butlerb@cityofnewportrichey.org)



**APRIL**

**Apr. 12**  
**Loquat Festival**  
 10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
 Sims Park - Free Admission

**Concert in the Park:**

**Apr. 19**  
**The Caribbean Chillers, Florida's Favorite Jimmy Buffett Tribute Show**  
 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
 Sims Park Amphitheater - Free Admission

**Riverside Concert:**

**Apr. 25**  
**The Garbage-Men**  
 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
 Sims Park Grassin Bridge - Free Admission

**Are you a local band interested in performing LIVE on the Sims Park stage? YOU could open for these acts!**

Please reach out to William Rader at [raderw@cityofnewportrichey.org](mailto:raderw@cityofnewportrichey.org) for more information.

**MARCH**

**Mar. 1**  
**Art on Main Chalk & Artisan Festival**  
 10:00 am - 4:00 pm  
 Downtown New Port Richey - Free Admission

**Concert in the Park Series:**

**Mar. 8**  
**Kyx Band, The Summer of Love II 60's Show**  
 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
 Sims Park Amphitheater - Free Admission

**Mar. 13**  
**St. Puppy's Crawl**  
 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
 Downtown New Port Richey, Tickets available from New Port Richey Main Street

**Mar. 15**  
**Super SmashBros Gaming Tournament, Ages 10-17**  
 Starts at 3:00 pm  
 Recreation and Aquatic Center  
 Entry Fee \$5, Register online or in-person

**Riverside Concert:**

**Mar. 21**  
**Rene Schlegel**  
 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
 Sims Park Grassin Bridge - Free Admission

**Mar. 22**  
**Writer's Week: Local Author Showcase**  
 10:00 am - 1:00 pm  
 New Port Richey Public Library - Free Admission

**ONGOING EVENTS:**

**Walk and Talk**  
 Mondays, 10:00 am  
 New Port Richey Public Library Courtyard

**Tasty Tuesdays Community Market**  
 Tuesdays, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm  
 New Port Richey Public Library Courtyard

**New Port Richey Fourth Friday Bazaar**  
 Fourth Friday of every month  
 Railroad Square, Downtown New Port Richey

Beyond these events, the New Port Richey Recreation and Aquatic Center and Public Library offer a variety of opportunities for our residents to connect, learn, and have fun. Whether you want to meet people who share your interests or learn something new like a language or sport, there's something for everyone!

For more information on classes and activities taking place at the New Port Richey Recreation and Aquatic Center, please call 727.841.4560.

For more information about the Public Library's classes, concerts, and other special events, please call 727.853.1279.

**THE NEXT STEP IN SMART WATER METER TECHNOLOGY**



The City of New Port Richey is dedicated to being on the cutting edge of available technology. As you may already know, the city is completing the installation of iPerl smart meters.

These meters consist of an electronic water meter, a transmitter, and an antenna enabling the city to read your water meter from the office for billing purposes.

The next step the city is committed to is providing our customers a seamless way to pay your water bill, view your water usage, and even set alerts for atypical water usage or continuous flow (a leak) by providing a new single-sign-on portal.

With this new single-sign-on portal, the alerts can be sent by email, text, or voice. It is our goal to provide you the best and most innovative service available.

Stay tuned for more information regarding this project, and your ability to sign-on, in the Spring edition of The Bridge.



iPerl Front



iPerl Register

iPerl Left

**Chasco Fiesta 2025**

**Some of this year's festivities:**

- **2025 Chasco Fiesta**  
**Friday, Mar. 28 - Saturday, Apr. 5**  
 For a full list of events, visit [www.chascofiesta.com](http://www.chascofiesta.com)
- **Chasco Coronation Ball**  
**Friday, Mar. 28, 6:00 pm - 11:00 pm**  
 Spartan Manor
- **Chasco Fiesta - Street Parade**  
**Saturday, Mar. 29, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm**  
 Downtown New Port Richey
- **Chasco Fiesta - Dragon Boat Races**  
**Saturday, Mar. 29, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm**  
 Cotee River
- **Chasco Fiesta - Car Show**  
**Sunday, Mar. 30, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm**  
 Downtown New Port Richey
- **Chasco Fiesta Golf Tournament**  
**Thursday, Apr. 3, 1:00 pm - 7:00 pm**  
 Seven Springs Golf & Country Club
- **Chasco Fiesta - Boat Parade**  
**Saturday, Apr. 5, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm**  
 Cotee River



## CITY OF NEW PORT RICHEY

5919 Main Street | New Port Richey, FL 34652

PRSR STD  
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EDDM RETAIL

Local  
Postal Customer

# SOLID WASTE RATE ADJUSTMENT

# 5.23%

In accordance with the provisions outlined in the contract with the City of New Port Richey's single hauler, Waste Pro, a rate increase of 5.23% will be applied to all single-family residential, commercial, and multi-family services, effective April 1, 2025.

The rate is an annual adjustment and is based on the CPI. In the case of single-family residential households, the current rate is \$59.28, and the new rate will be \$62.37.

To view these rates and other information related to the Solid Waste Collection Program, please visit the city's website at [www.cityofnewportrichey.org/Residents/Services/City-Trash-Services](http://www.cityofnewportrichey.org/Residents/Services/City-Trash-Services).

## PROTECT OUR WATERS: Simple Steps for Stormwater Management

Keeping our waterways clean starts with small, everyday actions. Did you know that common activities - like washing your car, changing your oil, or fertilizing your garden - can contribute to water pollution?

Unlike wastewater, stormwater doesn't go to a treatment plant; it flows directly into lakes, rivers, and oceans, carrying whatever it picks up along the way. Together, we can take simple steps to minimize the impact of stormwater runoff and protect our precious water resources:

- Limit fertilizer use.**  
Use fertilizers sparingly to prevent harmful nutrient buildup in waterways.
- Dispose of chemicals responsibly.**  
Never pour oil, grease, or other chemicals down storm drains. Clean up spills properly instead of washing them into the street.
- Pick up pet waste.**  
Always scoop and dispose of pet waste in the trash to prevent bacteria from entering local waters.
- Wash cars wisely.**  
Opt for a commercial car wash or wash your vehicle on grass or gravel where the soapy water won't flow into storm drains.
- Keep storm drains clear.**  
Prevent litter, leaves, and debris from entering gutters and storm drains.
- Prevent soil erosion.**  
Stabilize erosion-prone areas with plants or ground cover to reduce sediment runoff.

By taking these steps, we can reduce stormwater pollution and protect the health of our lakes, streams, and rivers. **For more information or additional tips, contact the New Port Richey Public Works Stormwater Utility Division at 727.841.4536.**

LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO KEEP OUR WATERS CLEAN!