

Value Adjustment Board deadline is Sept. 11

Special to the Immokalee Bulletin

NAPLES – Crystal K. Kinzel, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller, is reminding property owners that the deadline to file a petition with the Value Adjustment Board (VAB) is 5 p.m., Friday, Sept. 11, 2020. The VAB hears challenges made by property owners who disagree with property assessments, exemptions and classifications.

In August, county property owners received their Notice of Proposed Property Taxes, also called a Truth in Millage (TRIM) notice, from the Collier County Property Appraiser. Property owners in disagreement with any of the following found in the TRIM notice have options as authorized by Chapter 194, Florida Statutes:

- The property appraiser's assessment of the property's value;
 - A denial of an application for an exemption, such as homestead, veterans or senior citizen;
 - A denial of an application for property classification, such as agricultural or historic;
 - A denial of an application for tax deferral;
 - A determination that a change of ownership or a qualifying improvement has occurred.
- Property owners in disagreement may

request an informal conference with the Collier County Property Appraiser (239-252-8141) to discuss how the value was determined. If the issue is not resolved, the property owner may file a petition with the county's VAB to appeal the assessment. Property owners may also file a lawsuit in circuit court to challenge the property appraiser's assessment or the decision of the VAB.

The VAB is made up of five members: two from the Collier County Board of County Commissioners, one from the Collier County School Board, and two citizen members. The Office of the Clerk receives and processes petitions and schedules hearings.

The fee to file a petition with the VAB is \$15 per parcel and the deadline is 5 p.m. on Sept. 11, 2020. Property owners may file online at www.CollierClerk.com, or in person at the following address:

Collier County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller
Value Adjustment Board Clerk
Administration Building
3299 Tamiami Trail E., Suite 401
Naples, Florida 34112
239-252-7240

For more information, call Mike Sheffield at 239-252-6879 or email Mike.Sheffield@CollierClerk.com.

Fish Rules App expanded to include freshwater regulations

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TALLAHASSEE – The wait is over! Fish Rules App now includes freshwater fishing regulations. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is excited to announce that their successful partnership with the Fish Rules App has now expanded.

"The Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management is thrilled that the Fish Rules App is now available for freshwater. We have seen how our partnership with Fish Rules has strengthened the communication of fishing regulations and are looking forward to it getting even stronger," said Jon Fury, FWC's director for the Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management. "We encourage fresh and saltwater anglers to use the app whenever they are fishing one of Florida's extraordinary waterbodies to stay up to date on fishing regulations as well as help them identify their catch."

"This is the kind of app that helps agencies like FWC help anglers keep up to date on regulations, fish identification and so much more," said Jessica McCawley, FWC's Division of Marine Fisheries Management director. "We've been encouraging use of this app, known for its quality, for years and are happy about the release of the freshwater version as well."

"We are very excited about our partnership with the Florida Fish and

Wildlife Conservation Commission! Fish Rules App is based out of south Florida, so we're happy to be partnering with our home state," said app cocreator Albrey Arrington. "Everyone knows Florida is the Fishing Capital of the World, and it gives us a lot of pride to be partnered with FWC to help recreational anglers better understand fishing regulations. We are excited to announce that our latest update includes recreational freshwater regulations for Florida."

Fishing regulations change depending on your location, such as in a Fish Management Area. Enable location services in the Fish Rules App, and the app will automatically show you regulations for your actual position. The app is also partnering with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council who manage fisheries off Florida in federal waters.

If you have beautiful photos of your catch, Fish Rules is always looking for more photos to add to the app. Share your amazing shots by emailing them to photo@fishrulesapp.com. Preferred shots include the fish being held horizontally and taking up as much of the image as possible.

Learn more at FishRulesApp or follow Fish Rules at [Instagram.com/FishRulesApp](https://www.instagram.com/FishRulesApp) or [Facebook.com/FishRulesApp](https://www.facebook.com/FishRulesApp).

Sports Shorts

Stingrays to hold tryouts

Special to the Immokalee Bulletin

IMMOKALEE – The Stingrays, a 501c3 nonprofit adult minor league football team, cheerleading squad, dance, and community outreach program in Southwest Florida will be holding tryouts on Sunday, September 20 at the Immokalee Sports Complex, 505 Escambia St, Immokalee, from 10 a.m. to

2 p.m.

The Stingrays invite local families to attend. There will be a barbecue and a DJ. The event will also include retirement of the jersey of assistant head coach and Immokalee native Yoshi Smith. For more information please contact Jay Lawrence at 239-980-4397.

Guest Commentary

The intersections of being an "Essential Worker" during the Covid-19 Pandemic

By Yakira Chu

Special to the Immokalee Bulletin
IMMOKALEE – Covid-19 has posed considerable challenges to nearly every family, but none moreso than migrant women and children living in domestic violence in rural areas. At the Shelly Stayer Shelter for Victims of Human Trafficking & Domestic Violence in Immokalee, we serve this population as they navigate through multiple hardships. Through the Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancement and Leadership through Alliances program (DELTA), we recognize the significant wage gaps and lack of resources available to migrant survivors of domestic violence. We work with local employers to adopt policies that provide leave for employees impacted by violence and abuse. Such policies benefit workers and employers by preventing lost production, turnover costs, and keeping profits steady.

There has never been a more vital time for employers to adopt these policies. In Immokalee, our essential workers are mostly migrant laborers. According to the CDC, immigrants disproportionately live in the sectors hardest hit by the pandemic and work on the frontlines as field workers, health care and food service employees, where they face heightened risks of exposure. In Collier County, precisely in Immokalee, risk of exposure is high amongst migrant workers. Some employers are well equipped to provide protective gear and environments for their essential employees while others fail to follow protocols set forth by the CDC.

These risks to essential workers are even greater for women. Nearly 80% of the world's poorest people, mostly migrant women, live in rural areas and work mainly in agriculture. They have less access to resources to assist them with the economic effects the pandemic poses. Food insecurity, limited transportation and unsafe working conditions are part of their everyday lives. Even though they work on farms, they struggle to have food on their own tables. Independent sellers who were once available to them, have had to close because of the virus.

In addition to the food industry, transportation has been impacted. In the early stages of the pandemic, many were unsure if workers on crowded field buses needed

to be wearing masks and sitting six feet apart. Handwashing stations and masks were provided by the community to many farmworkers, but the anxiety and stress of following protocols lingered. Additional concerns for these workers included who would enforce these rules? Would it be police officers? As a population already apprehensive about law enforcement, the additional Covid-19 rules fueled mounting distress, especially in women.

The pandemic has also placed an additional burden on women who have children, as schools and child care centers closed, leaving them with few alternatives between work and home. When combined, these problems are breeding grounds for familial stress and strife which increases incidents of domestic violence. The Shelter has seen an increase in the number of outreach counseling and advocacy services, largely due to the additional challenges migrant women are experiencing during the current pandemic. When you are considered essential, you are not only essential to your families, but also to the community.

The economy has a direct impact on migrant workers. When it is good, workers succeed. When the economy wanes, unemployment rises, drug and alcohol abuse increase. In addition, crime trends increase, as does the number and severity of domestic violence cases. In Immokalee, cases of domestic violence mirror national trends, which show an increase of 17%.

As a community who depends on essential workers, we need to be aware and advocate for the most vulnerable among us. You can help. If you are an employer, review your current protocols to ensure you are supporting and protecting your employees and maintaining a safe workplace environment. The Shelter will assist you with free advocacy, training education and resources for your staff. As a consumer, ask business owners about their leave policies and stress the benefit these strategies bring to them as well as their employees.

Together, we will get through this difficult time. If you are a victim of abuse or violence, contact The Shelter's Crisis Line at 239-775-1101. For more information on the DELTA program, call the Immokalee Outreach Office at 239-657-5700.