

## metro

## COLD NOSES

Animals are available for adoption at area shelters **Story, B-3**



**good news**  
cindy holifield

# Board chairman blasts Curry's plan

## Pension fund board chief says mayor's proposal is 'terrible'

By David Bauerlein  
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As questions swirl around the Police and Fire Pension Fund's decision-making role in Mayor Lenry Curry's pension reform

plan, the chairman of the pension fund's board made his view clear during a board workshop Friday.

"It's a terrible plan," Richard Tuten said bluntly.

He said the proposal will make it easier for Curry to

get money for costly undertakings such as deepening Jacksonville's ship channel, but reducing pension contributions in the coming years risks long-term harm to the city's finances because its pension debt will keep growing.

"It makes him look good now, but this is putting off — very dangerously putting off — a problem

now for a problem 20 to 30 years from now," Tuten said, adding Curry won't be in office to deal with the financial fallout.

Curry fired back by issuing a statement that linked Tuten to John Keane, the retired administrator of the Police and Fire Pension Fund. Curry's statement also thanked four of the pension fund's board

members for meeting with Curry's administrative team over the past couple of weeks and "working with us to solve this pension crisis." Tuten was the only board member who didn't go to the one-on-one meetings.

"It's no surprise that one of the five — the board

**PENSION** continues on B-2

## Scouts soar to rank of Eagle in their troop

Five Ponte Vedra Beach boys soared through the stages of Boy Scouts and earned the rank of Eagle Scout together in Troop 288.

**Henry Curran, Josh Frantz, Victor Manly, Parker Shannon and Andrew Brown** were awarded their final Boy Scout rank in a ceremony held Feb. 11.

Each boy had to complete an Eagle Scout project, demonstrating their leadership and planning skills, which ultimately benefited a community organization.

The Eagle Scout rank is the highest in scouting. Chartered in 1989, in 28 years Troop 288 has been home to 104 scouts who have earned the Eagle ranking.

Henry, 17, collected, repaired, and presented 16 bikes with locks to the homeless residents of The Sulzbacher Center. He is the son of **Steve Curran** and **Sheila Hickson-Curran**.

Josh, 18, built a garden bench, as well as cleaned and landscaped the pavilion at The Clara White Mission center whose mission it is to prevent and reduce homelessness. He is the son of **Kevin** and **Kelly Frantz**.

Victor, 17, created several sets of corn-hole and Jenga wooden games to benefit three Ponte Vedra school Exceptional Student Education programs for students to engage in fun, yet challenging experiences. He is the son of **Ted** and **Tongila Manly**.

Parker, 18, led a drive to collect children's books for Books-A-Gogo, an organization devoted to helping childhood literacy. A total of 3,161 books were collected for children in need. He is the son of **Brad** and **Ann Shannon**.

Andrew, 18, poured a concrete addition to the front outdoor area at St. Francis House in St. Augustine, which serves the homeless population by providing access to essential services to help achieve stability and self-sufficiency. He is the son of **Rick** and **Sherill Brown**.

Additionally, as Boy Scouts, they have participated in numerous hours of community service and each earned over 21 merit badges as they developed skills. They learned to become self-sufficient with camping, cooking, fishing, hiking, and other skills while making lasting friendships.

**Here's more good news:**

• Purple Heart veterans were honored with their own parking space at the area Adamec Harley-Davidson locations, Baymeadows Road, Regency Square and Orange Park. There will be one reserved spot with a picture of a Purple Heart, presented by Chapter 524

**HOLIFIELD** continues on B-2

## The music, the dancing, the green



Pat Hogan (left) and Tara Mote grab a selfie together while wearing the green at Lynch's Irish Pub's St. Patrick's Day celebration Friday in Jacksonville Beach. Irish pubs throughout the area hosted St. Patrick's Day parties with live music, dancers, bagpipes and live radio shows. (Photos by Bruce Lipsky/Florida Times-Union)



Devon Starr, one of the Legacy Irish Dancing Academy's dancers, performs under the big tent at Culhane's Irish Pub's St. Patrick's Day celebration in Atlantic Beach.



Loughlan Vander Schaaff, 1, was a smiling little leprechaun at Culhane's.

## Vice President Pence to meet with area business leaders today

By Steve Patterson  
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Vice President Mike Pence and Gov. Rick Scott will meet with Jacksonville business operators today as part of a listening tour about issues affecting jobs and the economy.

Pence will be at Mac Pipers Envelope Converters

at 8370 Philips Highway for an invitation-only discussion of topics including the American Health Care Act, said Taylor Playforth, part of a team coordinating preparations for the visit.

U.S. Rep. John Rutherford, R-Fla., will also be at the meeting, said Kelly Simpson, the congress-

man's chief of staff.

Pence is expected to talk to the group around 2 p.m.

The visit continues a chain of appearances Pence has made to connect with businesses about Trump administration goals.

Last week, he went to a Harshaw Trane distribution center in Louisville,

Ky., to build support for the health care overhaul bill now pending in Congress, which is designed to replace the Affordable Care Act. Two days earlier, he had talked at a Latino organization's "Make Small Business Great Again Policy Summit."

The Federal Aviation Administration circulated

flight restrictions that would take effect today for an area around Craig airfield in Arlington, citing a federal code for flight around the president or vice president.

Pence visited Jacksonville as a candidate in September, when he spoke at First Baptist Church downtown.

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**SHUT THE FOLK UP AND LISTEN!**



Josh Frantz (from left), Parker Shannon, Andrew Brown, Henry Curran and Victor Manly, scouts from Troop 288 in Ponte Vedra Beach, have earned their Eagle Award, the highest award in the Boy Scouts. (Provided by Jim Curran)

## HOLIFIELD

Continued from B-1

as a courtesy to combat wounded veterans.

• Downtown Vision has named the #DT Jax Award winners, announced at the #DT Jax Gala: River of Dreams held recently. The award winners are **Michael Ryan**, downtown ambassador of the year; Intuition Ale Works, downtowner of the year; Winston Family YMCA, First Coast YMCA, downtown project of the year; and council president **Lori Boyer**, downtown achievement award.

The award honors individuals in the private and public sectors who demonstrate great dedication to the growth and success of downtown Jacksonville.

• **Doug Crane** from Fleet Landing, has been given a Lifetime Honorary membership to The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach. He is a charter member and past presi-



MJ Denardo (from left), Doug Crane and Tim Eymer stand together. Crane received a lifetime honorary membership in The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach for 33 years of perfect attendance and Service Above Self. (Provided by Fleet Landing)

dent of the chapter, and was awarded for 33 years of perfect attendance and service above self.

• National Blanket Day, the third Saturday in

February, was created to “bring awareness to the mission of Project Linus.” The project gives handmade blankets for children who are undergoing medi-



Purple Heart veterans were honored with their own reserved parking space at the area Adamec Harley-Davidson locations. (Provided by Adamec Harley-Davidson)

cal treatment or who have experienced trauma. There were 25 people from the local branch who participated this year and made 32 blankets for distribution to the area children's hospitals.

**Have good news? Send items to goodnews@jacksonville.com. You can fax them to (904) 359-4478 or mail them to The Florida Times-Union, P.O. Box 1949, Jacksonville, FL 32231. cindy.holfield@jacksonville.com, (904) 359-4295.**

## First Coast Happenings

### SATURDAY

**Pals and Paws USAA Trials**, Saturday-Sunday, Jacksonville Equestrian Center, 13611 Normandy Blvd. palsandpawsagility.com.

**Insane Inflatable 5K**, waves start at 8 a.m., EverBank Field. Includes a midway with games, merchandise, local vendors and food. \$49 in advance, \$75 at the gate; \$100 all-access pass. insaneinflatable5k.com.

**Community-Wide Yard Sale**, 8 a.m.-1 p.m., New Life Christian Fellowship, 2701 Hodges Blvd. \$25 to rent a space. Funds to benefit the youth missions fund. Information, email jwaski@nlcf.org.

**The Amelia Island Vintage Gran Prix**, 8 a.m., Saturday-Sunday, Fernandina Beach Municipal Airport, Amelia Island. \$15-\$45. svra.com/events/2017-amelia-island-vintage-gran-prix.

**Shamrock Showdown**, presented by the National Barrel Horse Association, Race 2, Youth Race, 8 a.m. Saturday; Race 3, 8 a.m. Sunday; Jacksonville Equestrian Center, 13611 Normandy Blvd. jaxevents.com.

**Riverside Arts Market**, yoga, 9 a.m.; market celebrating, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturdays, 715 Riverside Ave., under the Fuller Warren Bridge. Features the Abilities in Art project with an opportunity to create art using wheelchair wheels. The art will be available for purchase at The Mystery Trip Suitcase Party on April 29.

Includes arts and crafts and food vendors with fresh vegetables, fruits and produce. River Stage entertainment: Shane Myers, 10:30-11:15 a.m.; 11:30 - 1:30: Nikki Talley, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.; 1:50 - 2:50: Strangerwolf, 1:50-2:50 p.m. (904) 389-2449 or riversideartsmarket.com.

**Founding of Fort Mose**, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Fort Mose, 15 Fort Mose Trail, St. Augustine. Includes lectures and events to commemorate the first free African community. The Battle of Bloody Mose is June 17. (904) 823-2232 or fortmose.org.

**GastroFest**, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., Hemming Park, 117 W. Duval St., and Main Library, 303 N. Laura St. Includes demonstrations, tastings, workshops, a Homebrew Competition and Vegan Wine Tasting. hemmingpark.or

**Spring Carnival**, 11 a.m.-10 p.m., noon-6 p.m. Sunday, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 5752 Blanding Blvd. Includes amusement rides, carnival booths, an international food court, a silent auction, country store, live entertainment and raffles. bit.ly/2mxJrXR.

**“Showboat,”** meal 11:15 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., show 1:15 and 8 p.m. Saturdays; meal 12:15 and 6:30 p.m., show 2 and 8 p.m. Sundays; meal 6:30 p.m., show 8 p.m. Tuesdays-Fridays; Alhambra Theatre & Dining, 12000 Beach

Bld. Show runs through April 2. Reservations, (904) 641-1212 or alhambrajax.com.

**Fish Fry**, noon-3:30 p.m., Durkeeville Historical Society, 1293 W. 19th St. (904) 598-9567.

**“Meet the Maple Leaf Divers,”** noon-4 p.m., The Mandarin Museum, 11964 Mandarin Road. Features Keith Holland and the some of the divers who helped recover artifacts from the Union steamship, sunk in 1864 by a Confederate mine off Mandarin Point. Many of the rarely seen artifacts will be on display and the team will be available to answer questions. (904) 268-0784 or go to mandarinmuseum.net.

**Auditions for the Suwannee River Jam**, noon-5 p.m., The Jacksonville Landing. (904) 353-1177 or jacksonvillelanding.com.

**Salt Life Festival**, noon-10 p.m., SeaWalk Pavilion and Latham Plaza, Jacksonville Beach. Includes displays, demonstrations, food and other activities. \$20 VIP, features armchairs, front of stage seating, private port-a-lets, beverage servers, backstage food and beverage (where the musicians are available). saltlifefest.com.

**KidX Club Junior Chefs**, 1-3 p.m., Orange Park Mall, JCPenney Court, 1910 Wells Road. Kids learn the basics of cooking, try new recipes and get hands-on training. Free. (904) 269-2422.

**SEC Gymnastics Championships**, 2 p.m., Veterans Memorial Arena. \$14. jaxhappenings.com/Calendar-1)

**“Trial by Jury”** and **“The Trial of B.B. Wolf,”** trial satires performed by First Coast Opera, 4 p.m., Ancient City Baptist Church, 27 Sevilla St., St. Augustine. firstcoastopera.com.

**Grand Anchor Gala**, Port of Call: Hawaiiit benefit Strengthening Our Society (SOS) Project, 6-9 p.m., Sawgrass Marriott. Features live performance by John Crist. Includes a live and silent auction and a wine drawing. Wear cruise attire. \$125 each. projectsos.com.

**Primavera Hola Festival**, 6 p.m.-midnight, The Jacksonville Landing. Features a spring and culture celebration with vendors, entertainment and live music by Domenic Marte. (904) 353-1177 or jacksonvillelanding.com.

**The Mystery of Irma Vep — A Penny Dreadful**, 7:30 p.m. Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday, 7:30 p.m. Thursday-Friday, Lighthouse Theatre, 11 Old Mission Ave., St. Augustine. Show continues 7:30 p.m. March 25, 2 p.m. March 25, 7:30 p.m. March 30-April 1, 2 p.m. April 2. \$26 adults, \$24 seniors, \$20 military and students. (904) 825-1164 or limelight-theatre.org.

**Rhythm in the Night: The Irish Dance Spectacular**, 8 p.m., Thrasher-Horne Center, St. Johns River State College, 283 College Drive, Orange Park. \$13-\$43.

(904) 276-6750 or thcenter.org. **The Chieftains**, 8 p.m. Saturday, 6 p.m. Sunday, Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts, 300 W. Water St. \$25-\$65. (904) 354-5547 or jaxsymphony.org. **“4000 Miles,”** 8 p.m. Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday, 8 p.m. Friday, Atlantic Beach Experimental Theatre, 716 Ocean Blvd., Atlantic Beach. Show continues 8 p.m. March 25, 2 p.m. March 26. \$20. (904) 249-7177 or abetttheatre.com.

**Fences**, 8 p.m. Saturday and Thursday-Friday, Players by the Sea, 106 Sixth St. N., Jacksonville Beach. Show continues 8 p.m. March 25, 2 p.m. March 26, 8 p.m. March 30-April 1. \$23 general admission, \$20 seniors, students and military. (904) 249-0289 or playersbythesea.org.

### SUNDAY

**St. Paddy's Run** to benefit Springfield Improvement Association and Archives, 8 a.m., Evergreen Cemetery, 4535 Main St. N. Features 10K and 5K runs. \$35 in advance, \$40 at the gate. Registration, 1stplacesports.com/stpaddys.html

**Yappy Hour St. “PAW”ty's Day**, 2-5 p.m., The Jacksonville Landing. Features a St. “PAW”ty's Day Party for dogs, their parents and dog lovers. Dress your pooch in green for a chance to win King or Queen of the Green. Includes a dog and owner beer drinking contest, a pet expo, giveaways and music by DJ Kevin Tos. (904) 353-1177 or jacksonvillelanding.com.

**JCA Young Concert Artists Series**, 3 p.m., Jewish Community Alliance, 8505 San Jose Blvd. Features violinist Aleksey Semenkou, from Odessa, Ukraine, and winner of the 2012 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. Free. jcajax.org.

**Organ Concert**, as part of the “Goldberg Coast to Coast” tour, 4 p.m., Memorial Presbyterian Church, 32 Sevilla St., St. Augustine. Features German organist Felix Hell with J.S. Beach's “Goldberg Variations” arranged for organ.

**Live music** by the 418 Band, 6-10 p.m., The Jacksonville Landing. (904) 353-1177 or jacksonvillelanding.com.

**The Brain Candy Live Tour** with Adam Savage and Michael Stevens, 7 p.m., The Florida Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St. \$27.50-\$150. (904) 355-2787 or floridatheatre.com.

### TUESDAY

**Jax Beach Classic Car Cruise**, 5-8:30 p.m., SeaWalk Pavilion, First Street N., Jacksonville Beach. To apply for a spot in the plaza, email info@betterjax-beach.com. Classic vehicles not showcased in the plazas, park in the city parking lot next to Latham Plaza, 75 First Street N.

Parade of cars, 8:30 p.m., First Street North. jacksonvillebeach.org.

**Harlem Globetrotters**, 7 p.m., Veterans Memorial Arena. \$25.50. jaxhappenings.com/Calendar-1).

**Pilobolus: Shadowland**, 8 p.m., The Florida Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St. \$25-\$55. (904) 355-2787 or floridatheatre.com.

### THURSDAY

**St. Paul's Carnival and Rummage Sale**, rummage sale, 4-10 p.m. Thursday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. March 24-25, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. March 26; carnival, 6-10 p.m. Thursday, 6-11 p.m. March 24, noon-11 p.m. March 25, 1-7 p.m. March 26,

### FRIDAY

**Jacksonville Symphony** with Mendelssohn's Scottish Symphony, Coffee Concert, 11 a.m. Friday; Masterworks Series, 8 p.m. Friday and March 25, 3 p.m. March 26; Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts, 300 W. Water St. Features principal oboist Eric Olson. Coffee, \$20-\$42; Masterworks, \$25-\$65. (904) 354-5547 or jaxsymphony.org.

**Fish Fry**, 5-7 p.m. Fridays through Lent, Knights of Columbus Hall, 1501 Hendricks Ave. Call ahead for takeout. Dinners, three pieces with two sides, \$8.50; kids meals, \$3.50. (904) 398-7173.

**Music in the Plaza**, 7:30 p.m., Unity Plaza, 220 Riverside Ave. Features Flagship Romance. Free. jaxhappenings.com/Calendar-1)

**Live music** by Spanky the Band, 8 p.m.-1 a.m., The Jacksonville Landing. (904) 353-1177 or jacksonvillelanding.com.

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## PENSION

Continued from B-1

chairman Richard Tuten, a crony left over from the Keane era — continues to conduct himself with little regard for taxpayers,” Curry said in his statement. “In fact, Chairman Tuten has been a PFPF board member since 2003. During these times, he was a part of some of the most egregious decisions in the history of the board, which involved outrageous payouts of taxpayer dollars.”

Curry, who did not attend the pension fund board's workshop, won voter support in August for a half-cent sales tax that would help the city pay down the massive debt for its three pension plans: police and firefighters, general employees, and corrections officers.

The tax would start around 2031 after the current Better Jacksonville Plan sales tax expires.

Curry's plan would shift a big chunk of the city's pension tab to the period after the half-cent sales tax for pension cost starts flowing. Until then, the city would reduce its pension contributions, freeing up tens of millions of dollars a year for other needs. The exact amount remains to be seen because Curry has not yet put forward the details of how the financial arrangement would work.

Curry's office has said if nothing changes, the city's contributions to the three pension plans next year will be \$350 million, which is not financially sustainable. He has said the half-cent sales tax provides a dedicated funding source to assure the city can afford to pay its pension obligations. He also has negotiated with unions to put all future hires into 401(k) style accounts rather than pensions.

Tuten leveled his criticism as the board met in a workshop to get a better understanding of what its role will be as Curry's pension reform plan emerges from collective bargaining sessions with

unions and heads toward a vote by City Council.

The board scheduled the workshop expecting it would vote on making some changes in a previous pension reform agreement reached in 2015 between the city and the pension fund. But earlier this week, city General Counsel Jason Gabriel informed the pension fund that the board has no role in voting on proposals to repurpose the use of money in accounts overseen by the pension fund.

Tuten said Gabriel's legal advice appeared to be a “last-minute strategy” aimed at giving Curry a way to avoid going to the board and making the case for the changes.

“I'm just very frustrated, Jason, that you have to come down here and give this presentation because truthfully, something doesn't add up,” Tuten said. “Something smells here.”

He said it makes no sense that an agreement signed in 2015 by two entities — the city and the Police and Fire Pension Fund — can be changed by collective bargaining between the city and unions without any say-so by the pension fund.

Tuten also argued Gabriel has a conflict of interest in giving legal advice to the pension fund. “I know you say you work for the city, but the mayor is the one who tells you what to do, not us,” Tuten said.

Board member Bill Scheu countered the City Charter makes clear that the Office of General Counsel is the attorney for the pension fund.

“The city's Office of General Counsel is the legal officer for the whole city, like it or not,” Scheu said. “If there is a conflict between various agencies, the very powerful Office of General Counsel gets to decide it. He is our lawyer.”

Board members sought to get a second opinion from the pension fund's attorney, Bob Sugarman. He said he would need more time to do research.

David Bauerlein: (904) 359-4581

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