

# TALLAHASSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

IN THE NEWS



September 14 - October 17, 2008

# Tallahassee Community College

## IN THE NEWS

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- WCTV, September 22 – TCC welcomes faculty member Dan Li
- WCTV, September 25 – TCC Baseball hits the field for fall practice
- WCTV, September 25 – TCC’s Fine Art Gallery debuts new exhibit
- WCTV, September 30 – Students flock to The Learning Commons at TCC
- WTXL, October 6 – The Bail Out and potential effects on student loans



## **Tech@Night** Technology Workshops

The TCC Capitol Center\* and  
TCC's EWD Center will premier  
different training workshops

**Sept. 8 through Dec. 12, 6–9 p.m.**

\$25 each workshop

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or call **201-8760**

\*Also available at TCC Quincy House, Pat Thomas  
Law Enforcement Academy and TCC Wakulla Center

# Campus notes

## ■ FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

### Researcher maps protein mechanism

A Florida State University researcher who uses high-powered computers to map the workings of proteins has uncovered a mechanism that gives scientists a better understanding of how evolution occurs at the molecular level. Such an understanding eventually could lead to the development of new and more effective anti-parasitic drugs. Wei Yang is an assistant professor in FSU's Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry and a faculty member in the university's Institute of Molecular Biophysics.

**Agriculture commissioner to address conflict-resolution group:** Commissioner Charles Bronson of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services will be the guest speaker at the Florida Conflict Resolution Consortium's advisory council meeting at 1 p.m. Sept. 17. The council is based at Florida State University and helps find solutions to Florida's public policy problems and community disputes by providing consensus building and conflict-resolution services. Bronson's talk will cover strategies for building consensus on the future of agriculture in Florida, seeking solutions to regulatory issues

and reframing urban-rural divides to urban-rural connections. The event, which is free and open to the public on the fifth floor of the University Center.

**Life Sciences Building is dedicated:** At last, diverse areas of biological science have come together under one new roof to help drive the dynamic present and limitless future of biology research at Florida State University. On Friday, President T.K. Wetherell and the Board of Trustees held a dedication ceremony, followed by tours and a reception, for the \$55-million, 181,000-square-foot James E. "Jim" King Jr. Life Sciences Building, 319 Stadium Drive.

## ■ FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY

**FAMU College of Law ranks high in clinical opportunities:** Florida A&M University's College of Law in Orlando was recently ranked seventh for providing clinical opportunities by *National Jurist* magazine, beating out other schools like Cornell, Harvard, Stanford and Rutgers universities and making it one of two historically black colleges or universities on the list. The September issue of the magazine for law students ranked the top 50 American Bar Association law schools based on the total number of full-time clinical course positions offered per the number of full-time students. *National Jurist* used information from the Official Guide to ABA Approved Law Schools, 2008 edition, to compile the list. The

college's Legal Clinic Program is under the direction of Assistant Professor Ann Marie Cavazos.

**Licensing on Wheels comes to campus on Tuesday:** The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles will have its Florida Licensing on Wheels (FLOW Mobile) on FAMU's "Set" Tuesday, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Services available include the following: driver license/ID card renewals; lost or damaged driver license or ID replacement; name and/or address change; vehicle registration and tag renewals; specialty license plates; and disabled parking permits. Individuals can also enter their emergency contact information into the DSHMV database making it available to law enforcement in case of an emergency. Education information on alcohol-related driving offenses, implied consent and open-container violations will be available.

**School of Graduate Studies hosts student reception:** The Florida A&M University School of Graduate Studies and Research will host a graduate-student reception from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday in the School of Architecture Atrium. Food will be served and door prizes will be given away. For further

information, contact the School of Graduate Studies and Research at 599-3505.

**Founders Day Convocation set:** Florida A&M University has scheduled its Founders Day Convocation for 10 a.m. Friday, Oct. 3, in Lee Hall Auditorium. The keynote speaker will be Sen. Al Lawson Jr.

## ■ TALLAHASSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**Nominations sought for Distinguished Alumni Award:** The Tallahassee Community College Alumni Association is accepting nominations for the 2009 Distinguished Alumni Award. Preference is given to those who have received a degree or certificate from TCC. Nominations are due Nov. 12. Recipients will be selected and notified no later than Dec. 1, and an awards ceremony will be held at 7 p.m., Feb. 19. For more information or to submit a nominee, log on to [alumni.tcc.fl.edu](http://alumni.tcc.fl.edu).

## ■ KEISER UNIVERSITY

**Culinary-arts team brings home bronze medal:** Keiser University's culinary-arts student competition team recently earned a bronze medal in the American Culinary Federation's Florida State Student Championship Team Skills Competition at the annual Florida

Restaurant and Lodging Association Show. Culinary students Steven Goldberg (team captain), Chad Smith, Larry Lane, Miriam Hoiles and Steward Tidwell competed against 12 other student teams at the competition held in Orlando.

## ■ CHIPOLA COLLEGE

**Phi Theta Kappa holds Rock the Vote rally:** The Chipola College Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa will hold a Rock the Vote rally at Citizen's Lodge in Marianno on Friday from 6 to 9 p.m. The purpose of the event is to register new voters. Five local bands will perform throughout the evening. Solo artist Jonathan Gluck will open the event. Any U.S. citizen can register at the Rock the Vote event with a valid driver's license. For more information, contact Pam Rentz at 526-2761, Ext. 3287, or Cassie Mitchell at 557-3307.

## ■ THOMAS UNIVERSITY

**Dining for Education will benefit scholarship fund:** Thomas University presents Dining for Education on Oct. 4, as the inaugural event at Unohill Barn on Pebble Hill Plantation. The event begins at 6:30 p.m., and proceeds benefit Thomas University's General Scholarship Fund. For more information or to reserve tickets, call (229)227-6903.

## OUR OPINION

# Wellness and work

## Web site's designed with health, jobs in mind

**A**s a mountain of evidence all but proves, good health and a healthy pocketbook are often linked. People with financial means versus poverty dwellers are more likely to take advantage of better access to health care because they're more likely to be insured. Those in the work force also are likely to be exposed to educational materials on healthy lifestyles — and perhaps make healthier choices.

Wellness and work, in other words, often go hand in hand.

The launch Thursday of a comprehensive, regional Web site, BigBendHealth.com, is founded on that assumption. It's designed not only to improve access to medical information for individuals, from doctor's offices to HMOs to hospitals and pharmacies, but also to promote a healthy health-care industry in the Big Bend.

The Tallahassee/Leon County

Economic Development Council projects growth of that job sector will range from 5 percent to 14 percent over the next three years, based on a survey of 57 percent of professionals in the field. With about 17,000 employees, health care is the largest private-sector industry in Leon County. Four-hundred vacant jobs already are posted on the site.

"It's a comprehensive approach to serving our community," said Kim Moore, chief executive of Workforce Plus. She and Bill Law, president of Tallahassee Community College and former chairman of the EDC, spearheaded the effort, which began in January 2005 as the Big Bend Regional Healthcare Information Organization.

"It makes it a one-stop shop. Whatever your need is, it's addressed on this site," Ms. Moore said.

It's an excellent strategy in

several respects. With more emphasis on personal health, information that is easier to find puts more decision-making power in the hands of consumers. And with our region's dire need to grow and diversify its employment base, particularly amid the current downturn, a Web site that also serves as a job directory and resource for work-force development can only benefit the regional economy.

BigBendHealth.com says it will put Tallahassee "ahead of the curve and on the map in the delivery of safer, more cost-effective health care, place our community at the head of the line for federal and state research dollars and make Tallahassee a model for other communities seeking to control the cost and improve the quality of local health care."

That's a prescription for progress.

## TCC trustees to meet today

By Angeline J. Taylor  
Democrat Staff Writer

Tallahassee Community College trustees will hold a board workshop today at 2:30 p.m. that will be followed by a 4 p.m. business meeting in the Herb F. Morgan Room, located on the second floor of the Hinson Administration Building at 444 Appleyard Drive.

## Another Student Loan Crisis?

*This summer, rumors stirred that the incoming class of college freshmen was having difficulty securing loans for college. The crisis, however, is more about the ways we're asking college students to finance their educations.*

Author: Te-Ping Chen

It was an afternoon in May when Bill Spiers got the call. As financial aid director at Florida's Tallahassee Community College, he'd been expecting it for some time now. "Loan crisis goes to college," CNN blared. "Credit crisis hits students," The Boston Globe ran.

"Bill?" It was the local Chase representative on the line: "I have some bad news for you."

For months, like financial aid administrators around the country, Spiers had braced himself for the fallout of the sub-prime mortgage crisis, waiting for it to impact the student loan industry. "There was almost this level of panic," Spiers remembers. "People thinking, 'What's going to happen to us?'"

Now he had the beginning of an answer. Chase was cutting off federal loans to his school, refusing to lend its students money. In the weeks to come, Wells Fargo, Key Bank, SunTrust, and Citibank would all follow suit.

Throughout the spring, stung by investor wariness over the sub-prime mortgage meltdown, sales of asset-backed securities -- the source of liquidity for many student lenders -- contracted. As a consequence, some student lenders were "completely unable to obtain capital to make loans," says Bob Murray, spokesman for USA Funds, the largest guarantor of federal student loans. "Or they were having to pay significantly more than they were used to." Factor in the \$19 billion industry-subsidy cut Congress approved in September 2007 -- after the discovery that lenders were bribing financial aid officers sparked national outrage -- and the ranks of lenders participating in the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program, through which lenders like Chase provide capital for federally backed loans, were thinning. Hence the ensuing fear of a student loan "crisis" -- which, as it turns out, was more of a lender-inflated narrative (picked up by overly breathy media) than it was a real threat to students nationwide.

What angered Spiers was that lenders like Chase weren't cutting off FFEL loans to students at all schools -- just ones attending those they deemed a special risk, such as community colleges like his. "These are government-backed lenders conducting discriminatory practices," he says. "I was very disappointed."

But today, he's also relieved. Even as some lenders are spurning community colleges and for-profit and less competitive universities -- or have stopped making loans entirely -- others have picked up the slack. While 130 lenders have exited the FFEL program, those lenders were responsible for only 12.3 percent of Stafford and PLUS loans. Roughly 2,000 lenders continue to participate (though the top 50 originate 83.5 percent of all loans). At this point, says Murray, while students may have to juggle lenders, "it looks like anyone who's eligible and wants to take out a federal student loan will be served this academic year."

That includes students at [Tallahassee Community College](#), where Spiers reports that though the school's federal lender list has shrunk in half, no students have experienced trouble getting loans.

Given talk of a student loan "crisis" that proliferated this spring, the current response on campuses is, overall, remarkably staid. "We really haven't heard anything unusual from students," says Cathy Simoneaux, financial aid director at Loyola University-New Orleans. While some lenders have cut back, she reports, others have stepped in to fill the void.

In Arizona, asked what kind of reaction students at community colleges in Maricopa county have had, Ellen Neel, who directs financial aid at Glendale Community College, sounds nonplussed. "None at all," says Neel, who recently stepped down from her position as head of the Arizona Assoc. of Student Financial Aid Administrators. "They say, 'Okay, fine, I have to choose a different lender -- that's all.'"

That's because the idea of a student loan 'crisis' was always a fabrication, says USPIRG's Luke Swarthout.

"Our student loan structure is built on an extensive network of safeguards and built-in alternatives," explains Swarthout. To begin with, Swarthout notes, should a serious number of lenders leave FFEL -- which serves about 80 percent of students receiving federal loans -- schools can opt to get loans directly from the U.S. Treasury through the Direct Loan program (this year, 348 schools have switched from FFEL to DL). According to the Department of Education, the DL program is currently prepared to double its lending capacity; senators like Edward Kennedy are pushing for its expansion.

Federal loans are enough to bear the brunt of tuition for nearly 90 percent of students who borrow to finance their education. Nationally, over 75 percent of students attend either public four-year institutions (at an average annual \$13,600) or community colleges (\$2,300). Apart even from grants, any student -- regardless of income -- can receive up to \$31,000 during undergraduate study in unsubsidized Stafford loans. Families also have the option of parental PLUS loans, which can cover up to the full tuition cost at any accredited school. If a parent is denied a PLUS, a student's overall Stafford limit rises to \$57,500.

That doesn't mean there isn't a student loan access problem. It just exists for a narrower population -- namely, students who attend schools with the highest tuition bills and are used to depending on private loans. Typically, these are students attending costly proprietary schools or private universities, where about 16 percent of students seek out private along with federal loans. "Those loans are harder to get now, and more expensive," says Maureen Budetti, student aid policy director for the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. Many lenders who make private loans, like Sallie Mae, have imposed tighter credit checks, while others have ceased such lending altogether. Nevertheless, Budetti reports that only a "small percentage" of borrowers have been affected. Mark Kantrowitz, who publishes FinAid.org, puts that estimate at 1 to 2 percent, or about 100,000 students.

But even students having trouble with private loans may have other options, like getting a co-signer to help obtain a loan, which will also, typically, net better interest rates as well. And then there's the fact that -- as Robert Shireman, director of the Project on Student Debt, points out -- about 75 percent of private borrowers never max out on their federal options in the first place.

One reason is lack of awareness about those choices. "I didn't understand the difference between federal and private loans, and my counselor never really explained it to me," says Blaine LaBron, who attended Pepperdine University without fully using his federal loan eligibility, graduating in 2006 with \$95,000 in private debt. Since graduating, combining high variable interest rates, origination and late fees, that figure has ballooned to \$125,000.

According to Harris Miller, director of the Career College Association, the complexity of the FAFSA application is another factor. At least some of the spike in federal aid requests over the past year -- applications have jumped 17 percent -- is likely because "since the online private approval process is harder now, people are finally using their full range of options," says Miller.

Even in Massachusetts, where the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority suspended private loans to 40,000

students in July, officials sound fairly sanguine. "The vast majority of our schools report a very small number of students who still need loans at this time," says Richard Doherty, who heads the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts. According to an August AICUM poll, 70 percent of their members have had less than 15 students experience difficulties in obtaining private loans. Only a "tiny percent" reported over 50 students with similar problems.

To be honest, says Doherty, the notion of a student loan "crisis" was "perhaps overplayed" by the media.

Michael Dannenberg, Senior Fellow at the New America Foundation, agrees. "People were running around, saying the sky is falling, that kids are going to go without federal student loans, but the DOE never said that," says Dannenberg. "Quite the opposite. Because, in truth, there never was a real crisis for students when it came to federal student loans."

"There was, however, a real crisis for some lenders who weren't able to access capital at the same low rates they'd been used to," he adds.

In many ways, the long-standing political tension between the FFEL and DL programs is what undergirded talk of "crisis" this spring. Because the DL program, unlike FFEL, makes its loans directly from the U.S. Treasury, it isn't subject to the vagaries of the asset-backed security market. Meanwhile, because it cuts out the middleman, for taxpayers, the DL program is less costly as well -- about five times cheaper per loan, according to the Government Accountability Office. But for lenders like Chase and Sallie Mae, who profit heavily from low-risk, government-guaranteed loans, it means lost business. And for lenders, it was easier to hype up talk of a crisis (with the hope of reinstating past subsidies) than allow for renewed attention to the DL program.

Certainly lenders had a role in contributing to a mood of panic. This spring, for example, Sallie Mae (which was fully privatized in 2004) warned it might leave the FFEL loan program altogether -- a gesture Barmak Nassirian, associate executive director of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, dismisses as an obvious stunt. "Sallie Mae threatening to give up their student lending business is about as credible as Starbucks threatening to leave the coffee business," says Nassirian.

"It may not have been credible, but it certainly was effective," says the Project on Student Debt's Shireman. In May, after state agencies in Michigan, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania announced plans to temporarily suspend federal loan-making, Congress passed the Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act, which -- among other moves -- authorized an industry rescue plan offering lenders low-interest lines of credit and the chance to sell their loans to the government at

an above face-value rate.

For lenders, says Alan Collinge, founder of Student Loan Justice, the credit crunch was “convenient,” to say the least. “It helped change the debate away from the more predatory nature of the industry,” he says, citing how lenders have in the past won exemptions from the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act and in 2005 persuaded Congress to remove private loan bankruptcy protections.

Shireman, however, is measured in his appraisal of Congress’ overall response. “I thought it was about right,” he says. Apart from the Act’s efforts to cushion lenders, it also authorized PLUS loan payments deferrals and expanded the Stafford loan limit. “It protected the federal fiscal interest without heaping a lot of additional subsidies on lenders, which was a real danger,” he says. “And students are getting their federal loans.”

As for the private loan crunch, LaBron -- whose monthly debt payments total \$1,200 -- says that had he known how much private debt would cost him in the end, he would’ve made other educational choices. “I haven’t even framed my diploma yet, because all I see is a \$125,000 IOU,” he says. “I think those kids are lucky. Think of the alternative -- they could end up like me.”

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Te-Ping Chen is a writer living in Washington, DC.

## TCC trustees approve reduction of budget

By Angeline J. Taylor  
DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

Tallahassee Community College trustees approved a \$2.32-million reduction to the 2008-09 budget with the understanding that more money will likely have to be cut in the future.

The decision came during a Board of Trustees meeting Monday.

"Cutting more than the state requires is no fun," said TCC President Bill Law.

Gov. Charlie Crist has asked all state agencies to withhold 4 percent from their budgets. At Monday's meeting, TCC's board approved to slash 7.5 percent.

Trustee Eugene Lamb said the move "puts (TCC) in a good posi-

tion." All dollars taken away from the college's budget came from state allocations.

TCC is achieving the cuts in part by holding vacant positions open, restructuring personnel and reducing technology purchases. Also, \$650,000 will be taken away from capital projects to meet budget demands.

"What the governor puts in from the rainy day fund, that's a temporary fix," Law said.

The Legislative Budget Commission approved Gov. Charlie Crist's request to take \$672.4 million out of the state's rainy-day fund. More than \$700 million is needed to balance the state's \$1.4-billion shortage.

## Maguire Center brings lifetime learning at Westminster Oaks

By Pam Wilson  
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

A groundbreaking ceremony for the Maguire Center for Lifelong Learning was held on Sept 6 at Westminster Oaks Active Living Community. Named for Charlotte E. Maguire, M.D., who donated \$1 million to build the new \$4.3 million venue for lifelong learning, the center will provide the community's more than 550 residents with a 10,000-square-foot complex.

It will include a 350 seat auditorium with a stage, classrooms, wireless access bistro and expanded library space.

Dr. Maguire said, "I just want to motivate other senior citizens to be active and have something to enjoy." Completion of the learning center is expected by Fall 2009.

Westminster Oaks has partnered with the Academy at FSU, Florida Humanities Council, [Tallahassee Community College](#), FSU College of Medicine and other educational and cultural resources to help the residents of Westminster Oaks challenge their minds, stay socially connected, and enhance themselves physically and spiritually to improve their overall sense of well-being.

Opening the groundbreaking event with bagpipes, Pipe Major Joe Ashcraft, was followed by brief presentations on



the vision, importance, commitment, and reality of lifelong learning at Westminster Oaks. Speakers included Dr. Donald Alford, past president of the Academy at FSU, James Emerson, CEO, Westminster Communities of Florida, Charlotte E. Maguire, M.D., philanthropist and resident of Westminster Oaks and Pam Wilson, Westminster Retirement Communities Foundation.

# Wakulla Ecotourism INSTITUTE

TCC Wakulla Center

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## Updated: Student veterans starting TCC group

By Julian Pecquet  
DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

He may have been battle-hardened in Iraq, but Nick Breeze has nevertheless felt overwhelmed at times during his first year at Tallahassee Community College.

In his American History class, for example, he heard his teacher tell the class to check the blackboard for assignments — but didn't know the reference was to an online interactive computer program, not an old-fashioned chalk board. Breeze missed three quizzes, and got a C.

"I laugh about it," the 24-year-old former soldier said. "Now."

Breeze is far from alone. He's one of thousands of young veterans who are having to adapt to a whole new environment after they get out of the service, leaving a well-regimented lifestyle for the chaos of college.

"It's easy to get up, go get shot at and come back home," explained Ernesto Rojas, another TCC student who's still in the Marines and recently got back from Iraq. "You know what's expected of you."

That's not always the case in civilian life. That's why Breeze is determined that other veterans should get the help they need to adapt to their new lives. Along with Navy veteran Aaron Gustafson, 28, and several others he's been setting up a student veterans association on the TCC campus, where many veterans start their college careers before transferring to university.

"When you're separating from (the military), you don't get all the information to ease your transition," Gustafson said. "This is a pretty good way to pick up people who may need a little bit of help,"

And the time is ripe to be starting such a group at TCC, said Dolores Robinson, the veterans affairs coordinator for the community college. She said TCC averages about 450 students per semester attending school on the G.I. Bill, with many more students that have military backgrounds — active duty troops, for example, or veterans who aren't eligible for the benefits — that aren't tracked in the same way.

But the school is expecting a significant influx of student veterans — perhaps 100 more per semester — in the near future as the U.S. military draws down its forces in Iraq and a new, more generous G.I. Bill goes into effect next August. A recent report by the Congressional Budget Office found that



From left, student veterans Ernesto Rojas (Marines), Nick Breeze (Army), Aaron Gustafson (Navy) and Danny Wagner (Marines) pose on the TCC campus.

the new benefits bill could lead to a 16 percent drop in re-enlistments.

"It's going to make it easier for (veterans) to go to school," Robinson said. "I think there's going to be a boost."

She applauded the idea of the veterans group, which is not yet official.

"I talk to the veterans constantly, and they always need some place to go to connect with (other veterans)," she said. "They have a different experience in life. They can relate with each other and help (each other) make the transition."

Breeze said the group would be open to veterans of all branches, and seeks to create bridges with Florida State University, which already has a Collegiate Veterans Association, unlike Florida A&M University.

"We'd like to reach out to FAMU," he said, "and form a Tallahassee Trifecta."



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### To register

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## Distinguished Leadership Awards presented to community leaders

By Dave Hodges  
DEMOCRAT BUSINESS EDITOR

Judging from the various talents and accomplishments honored at Thursday night's 14th Annual Distinguished Leadership Awards, honoree Marjorie Turnbull was right when she said "There is no template for leadership."

"As we have seen in the amazing individuals who were nominated and recognized tonight ... leadership styles and demands are unique to the individual and very diverse," said Turnbull, who received the 2008 Lifetime Leadership Award.

"What we share in common is we live in a community that nurtures leadership. Tallahassee welcomes and respects the caring heart that stretches out and reaches to meet the challenge at hand," she told the gathering of 400 at the Civic Center.

A former Leon County Commissioner, a state legislator, and Tallahassee Community College Foundation director, Turnbull was honored for her many community endeavors, her ability to unite people behind a project and her can-do attitude.

The black-tie dinner helped Leadership Tallahassee, a program of the Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce, raise money for Youth Leadership Tallahassee, a training program for high-school juniors.

Retired Judge James E. Joanos received the Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce 2008 Godfrey Smith Past Chairmen's Award in honor of work on behalf of the chamber and the community. He was chairman of the business organization in 1968.

The annual Leadership Pacesetter Award honors an individual who is new to the Tallahassee area or who has had a



TCC President Bill Law smiles as Marjorie Turnbull blows kisses to the audience while they applaud her for receiving the 2008 Lifetime Leadership Award during the 14th Annual Distinguished Leadership Awards Thursday, Sept. 18, 2008 at the Civic Center in Tallahassee, Fla.

leadership role for less than 10 years. It was presented to Kimberly Moore, CEO of Workforce Plus. She serves on the board of the Early Learning Coalition and the Tallahassee/Leon County Economic Development Council.

Honored with the 2008 Leader of the Year Award was Florida A&M University President James Ammons, who was recognized for accomplishments during the past 12 months. Chief among them was directing the university's efforts to regain its accreditation and institute financial and management improvements.

Attorney Steve Uhlfelder received the Servant Leadership Award, which recognizes achievements beyond a single field or endeavor. Uhlfelder has served as chairman of the Florida Children's Coalition and a mentor at Riley Elementary School.

## Tallahassee residents are walking, biking and taking the bus as gas shortage continues

By Julian Pecquet

DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

With gas prices still high and stations across town running empty, more people have been looking for alternative forms of transportation over the past few days — walking, biking or taking the bus.

The city of Tallahassee's transit system saw a 28.4-percent increase in ridership Monday over the same day a year ago; that's 23,359 riders versus 18,188. Much of that appears to be because of the gas scare. On Monday, Sept. 8, ridership was up only 7 percent over the same day the previous year.

Places where ridership was up more than 11 percent were on the routes that serve the two universities, [Tallahassee Community College](#), SouthWood, Frenchtown, Capital Circle Northwest and the south side.

Sherry Anderson, an architectural historian with the state of Florida, was one of the people contributing to the spike: She walked to the mall on Sunday, and took the bus Monday for her one-mile commute to the R.A. Gray building.

"Our gas was so low," she said, "and we couldn't find gas anywhere, and we had to ditch the cars for three days."

But the spike could be short-lived, said Jeff Horton, director of Commuter Services of North Florida, which helps organize carpools and vanpools.

"I think many people are seeing this as a very temporary situation," he said. "It doesn't look like people are looking for alternatives. That may change if gas prices stay at the high level they're at right now, but for now the panic has not translated into more requests for services."

Commuters in Tallahassee have only recently begun to take a hard look at alternatives to driving, and many obstacles remain.

According to 2000 Census data, 79.4 percent of Leon County workers age 16 or older drove to work alone in 2000; the U.S. average was 75.7 percent, and the average for Florida was 78.8 percent.

Anderson, for example, was back to driving to work by Tuesday, after fueling up. She said riding the bus regularly might work for her if it ran more often than once an hour: "It's just not practical when you're trying to get to work."



StarMetro ridership is higher than normal as a result of recent fuel shortages.

She said walking was tough, too, because there are no sidewalks on Apalachee Parkway, near her house.

"I can actually see the Capitol building from my house but can't walk there and be safe," she said. "It's depressing, to say the least."

Still, the long-term trend is toward more alternatives to cars.

The bus service has been seeing increased ridership due to better marketing and improved service over the past two years, said Ron Garrison, StarMetro's executive director.

"The last two years we've seen a steady increase," he said. "I believe we'll continue to have an upward trend so long as we continue to improve the service."

Susan Farmer, a state employee, said she'll switch to riding the bus when it's cheaper than her fuel-efficient Mazda Miata.

But the recent gas crisis has led her to cut back on her driving. On Tuesday, for example, she'd planned to get her hair done and drive a block and a half for gas, instead of making a separate trip later.

"I haven't stopped driving, but I try to combine trips more than I used to and I don't 'run out for a few things' anymore," she said. "I stay home more on the weekends. Every time the gas prices rise, I recalculate whether or not it would be cheaper to take the bus."

## Veterans start new chapter at TCC

By Julian Pecquet  
DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

He may have been battle-hardened in Iraq, but Nick Breeze has felt overwhelmed at times during his first year at Tallahassee Community College.

In his American History class, for example, he heard his teacher tell the class to check Blackboard for assignments — but didn't know the reference was to an online interactive computer program, not an old-fashioned chalk board. Breeze missed three quizzes, and got a C.

"I laugh about it," the 24-year-old former soldier said. "Now."

Breeze is far from alone. He's one of thousands of young veterans who are having to adapt to a new environment after they get out of the service, leaving a well-regimented lifestyle for the chaos of college.

"It's easy to get up, go get shot at and come back home," explained Ernesto Rojas, another TCC student who's still in the Marines and recently got back from Iraq. "You know what's expected of you."

That's not always the case in civilian life. That's why Breeze is determined that other veterans should get the help they need to adapt to their new lives. Along with Navy veteran Aaron Gustafson, 28, and several others he's been setting up a student veterans association on the TCC campus, where many veterans start their college careers before transferring to a university.

"When you're separating from (the military), you don't get all the information to ease your transition," Gustafson said. "This is a pretty good way to pick up people who may need a little bit of help,"

The time is ripe to be starting such a group at TCC, said

Dolores Robinson, the veterans-affairs coordinator for the community college. She said TCC averages about 450 students per semester attending school on the GI Bill, with many more students that have military backgrounds — active-duty troops, for example, or veterans who aren't eligible for the benefits — that aren't tracked in the same way.

But the school is expecting a significant influx of student veterans — perhaps 100 more per semester — in the near future as the U.S. military draws down its forces in Iraq and a new, more generous GI Bill goes into effect next August. A recent report by the Congressional Budget Office found that the new benefits bill could lead to a 16 percent drop in reenlistments.

"It's going to make it easier for (veterans) to go to school," Robinson said. "I think there's going to be a boost."

She applauded the idea of the veterans group.

"I talk to the veterans constantly, and they always need some place to go to connect with (other veterans)," she said. "They have a different experience in life. They can relate with each other and help (each other) make the transition."

Breeze said the group seeks to create bridges with Florida State University, which already has a Collegiate Veterans Association, unlike Florida A&M University.

"We'd like to reach out to FAMU," he said, "and form a Tallahassee trifecta."

Contact reporter Julian Pecquet at (850) 599-2307 or [jjpecquet@tallahassee.com](mailto:jjpecquet@tallahassee.com).

## TCC to Offer Chinese Language Class

*Tallahassee Community College News Release:*

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (September 22, 2008) – Learning traditional Chinese just got easier.

Beginning October 2 and continuing for eight consecutive Thursdays, Tallahassee Community College will offer a course on the basics of the Chinese language.

“Learning Traditional Chinese” will be held from 6:30-8:30 p.m., Thursdays, October 2-November 20 at TCC’s Center for Economic and Workforce Development. The course costs \$220 and is open to TCC students, faculty and staff, as well as the general public.

The class is the result of discussions between College administrators and renowned Tallahassee restaurateur Lucy Ho, one of the College’s most avid supporters. Born in Taiwan, Ho’s quest is to educate people about the traditional Chinese language and its culture. Of particular interest is the business community, a growing number of whom interact with Chinese on a regular basis.

“In the world market, China has become a huge ‘dragon’ that should be recognized,” said Carl Huang, chair of the Taiwanese American Association of Tallahassee. “To be successful in business dealings with China, people need to learn how to communicate, both orally and written, in Chinese.”

The recent Beijing Olympics also demonstrated the many wonderful treasures China offers as a tourist destination. To enjoy these, visitors should be familiar with the traditional Chinese language, Huang added.

“Learning Traditional Chinese” will be led by Fang-Yi Chang.

During the 16 hours of in-class training, participants will:

- Build vocabulary and sentence patterns in communicative contexts;
- Develop a solid foundation for correct punctuation;
- Expand abilities for simple conversational Chinese
- Read and write, using traditional or complex characters, in conjunction with speaking and listening skills.

## Boyd Secures \$21.7 Million For Defense Projects At FSU, FAMU, TCC

Posted: 5:49 PM Sep 24, 2008

WASHINGTON, DC

Congressman Allen Boyd (D-North Florida), a member of the Defense Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, has secured a total of \$21.7 million for several defense research projects to be conducted at Florida State University (FSU), Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), and Tallahassee Community College (TCC).

This funding was included in the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act of 2009 (HR 2638), which passed today in the House of Representatives. The bill is expected to be passed by the Senate this week, and the President will sign the bill into law before October 1.

“At the frontlines of defense research, our colleges and universities play an integral role in our national defense efforts,” said Congressman Boyd. “Investing in our research programs not only benefits our military, but it also helps strengthen our schools’ reputations as leaders in research and innovation. I am proud to support this funding to facilitate the important work being done at FSU, FAMU, and TCC.”

Congressman Boyd secured funding for the following defense-related projects in the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act of 2009:

FSU:

\$4.5 million for the Integration of Electro-Kinetic Weapons into the Next Generation of Navy Ships. This project supports the strategic development by the U.S. Navy of the next generation warship – the all-electric ship. FSU will use the funding to study future technologies and the requirements necessary to address the unique challenges associated with this goal.

\$2.4 million for Nanotubes Optimized for Lightweight Exceptional Strength (NOLES)/Composite Materials. FSU will use this funding to continue researching and testing nanotube-reinforced composites with the goal of developing lightweight

body armor, equipment, and vehicles for the military, using the strongest material known to man for maximum protection.

\$1.6 million for the Integrated Cryo-Cooled High Power Density Systems. FSU will lead this multi-university program with the goal of achieving cryo-cooled high power densities to enhance the performance of military vehicles through the reduction of weight and improved efficiency.

FAMU:

\$6.4 million for Future Affordable Multi-Utility Materials for the Army Future Combat Systems. FAMU will use this funding to continue researching and developing advanced process sensors to be used by the U.S. Army’s unmanned vehicles, which gather intelligence and carry out various missions on the land and in the air.

\$4.8 million for the Standoff Improvised Explosive Device Detection Program. FAMU will use this funding to continue researching and developing advanced sensors and imaging systems for the detection of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), helping service members in the field identify IEDs without having to be near them.

\$1.2 million for the Advance Standoff Technologies for National Security. FAMU will use this funding to research and develop advanced sensor systems capable of detections of nuclear, chemical, or biological attacks.

TCC:

\$800,000 million for the Manufacturing and Industrial Technology Center. This funding will be used for the establishment of TCC’s Manufacturing and Industrial Technology Center, which will provide an interface between the educational training and applied needs of the manufacturing and industrial sectors. The center will partner with industry to jointly fund the development of dual use technologies needed to maintain U.S. technological superiority on the battlefield and for industry to remain competitive in the North Florida area.

Find this article at:

<http://www.wctv.tv/news/headlines/29714609.html>

## Maguire Center brings lifetime learning at Westminster Oaks

By Pam Wilson

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

A groundbreaking ceremony for the Maguire Center for Lifelong Learning was held on Sept 6 at Westminster Oaks Active Living Community. Named for Charlotte E. Maguire, M.D., who donated \$1 million to build the new \$4.3 million venue for lifelong learning, the center will provide the community's more than 550 residents with a 10,000-square-foot complex.

It will include a 350 seat auditorium with a stage, classrooms, wireless access bistro and expanded library space.

Dr. Maguire said, "I just want to motivate other senior citizens to be active and have something to enjoy." Completion of the learning center is expected by Fall 2009.

Westminster Oaks has partnered with the Academy at FSU, Florida Humanities Council, Tallahassee Community College, FSU College of Medicine and other educational and cultural resources to help the residents of Westminster Oaks challenge their minds, stay socially connected, and enhance themselves physically and spiritually to improve their overall sense of well-being.

Opening the groundbreaking event with bagpipes, Pipe Major Joe Ashcraft, was followed by brief presentations on the vision, importance, commitment, and reality of lifelong learning at Westminster Oaks. Speakers included Dr. Donald Alford, past president of the Academy at FSU, James Emerson, CEO, Westminster Communities of Florida, Charlotte E. Maguire, M.D., philanthropist and resident of Westminster Oaks and Pam Wilson, Westminster Retirement Communities Foundation.

## TCC Art Exhibit titled Iraq: Five Years Up In Smoke

*Last Updated: 10:47 PM Sep 25, 2008*

*Reporter: Heather Biance*

*Email Address: [heather.biance@wctv.tv](mailto:heather.biance@wctv.tv)*

Tallahassee Community College's Fine Art Gallery unveiled an exhibit that evokes a powerful range of emotions and personal reflection on the war in Iraq.

The exhibit titled "Iraq: Five Years up in Smoke" debuted Thursday night with a combination of sculptures, assemblage and paper and cloth.

The exhibit features the work of three Tallahassee artists, Maureen Sullivan, Jeff Goldberg and Natalie Provo.

"Each month, representing the full moon, I'd burn bread and petroleum on these white plates representing the passing time that we'd been engaged in the war on Iraq," says exhibit artist, Natalie Provo.

The exhibit will be on display through October 30th at The Fine Art Gallery on TCC's campus.

Find this article at:

<http://www.wctv.tv/news/headlines/29777899.html>

## TCC administrators explain effects of budget cuts

By Angeline J. Taylor  
Democrat Staff Writer

More students will be assigned to each class. Professors who have resigned or retired will have their jobs filled with less experienced replacements. And computers that possibly need to be replaced will have to stay in place for at least another year.

Those are the plans made by administrators and trustees of Tallahassee Community College since a \$2.32 million budget cut was approved for the institution. That dollar figure equates to a 7.5-percent budget cut for TCC for the 2008-2009 school year. But that isn't what worries administrators the most. They are more worried about the future.

"I don't want to be an alarmist," said Barbara Sloan, vice president of academic affairs.

Sloan said that if another round of budget cuts hit TCC, administrators will have to start looking at what programs and personnel can be cut. TCC administrators already cut 3.5-percent more money than other state agencies were required to cut as requested by Gov. Charlie Crist. It was a move done in an attempt to be proactive, said TCC President Bill Law.

"Cutting more than the state requires is no fun," said TCC President Bill Law when the cuts were introduced to trustees.

The cut means \$1.2 million will be taken away from personnel. More than \$464,000 will be taken from college purchases and \$650,000 from capital and technology purchases.

Return to [Tallahassee.com](http://Tallahassee.com) for more details

Tallahassee Democrat • September 28, October 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 2008

Gadsden County Times • September 25, October 2, 9, 16, 2008

American Classifieds • September 25, October 2, 9, 16, 2008

Wakulla News • September 25, October 2, 9, 16, 2008

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## TCC braces for deeper budget cuts

*More than \$2.3 million cut from current budget; administrators worry about future*

By Angeline J. Taylor

DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

Class sizes may be larger, retiring professors will be replaced with less experienced instructors and computers that need to be replaced may have to stay in place.

These are the likely results of Tallahassee Community College's budget cuts since administrators and trustees approved a \$2.32 million reduction, creating a \$60 million budget for the 2008-2009 school year. But this year's budget isn't what worries administrators most. They are more worried about the future.

"I don't want to be an alarmist," said Barbara Sloan, vice president of academic affairs at TCC.

Sloan said if another round of budget cuts hits TCC, administrators will have to start looking at what programs and personnel can be eliminated. Administrators already cut 3.5 percent more money than other state agencies were required to slash as requested by Gov. Charlie Crist. It was a move done in an attempt to be proactive, said TCC President Bill Law.

"Cutting more than the state requires is no fun," Law said.

Students, meanwhile, said they believe the college has their interests at heart but that administrators are strapped by state directives.

Additional dollars stripped away from college coffers means \$1.2 million will be taken away from personnel. More than \$464,000 will be taken from professional development or salaries, while \$650,000 is stripped from capital and technology purchases.

"It's a lot easier to cut it over 12 months than over six months," Sloan said.

She added that the cuts recently approved by trustees will require administrators to freeze some job vacancies for a year. Part-time or less-experienced teachers will fill in for five professors who retired this summer.

A restructuring of some jobs has taken place, eliminating some vacant positions, Sloan said. Each faculty member received two additional students per class. But Sloan was quick to say that an abundance of students will not be added to individual classes. To do that, she said, would take away from TCC's core mission.

"Saying we'll (dramatically) raise class size means we'll lose revenue," Sloan said in describing TCC's role in bridging the gap



TCC student Casey Dunlap concentrates while working in TCC's new learning commons on Friday. TCC administrators have approved a \$3.5 million budget cut for the 2008-09 school year and one of the items on that list are computer purchases. (MIKE EWEN/Democrat)

for new high-school graduates and up-and-coming university upperclassmen.

Jerry Schilling, TCC's vice president for administrative services, said the critical equipment replacements will most likely get done.

"What we normally do is set aside enough to get us through the year," he said.

TCC students believe administrators have done the best job possible in handling the required budget cuts. But they blamed state lawmakers for requiring cuts to education.

"I think it's a mistake they're going to pay for in the future," Nick Breeze, 24, said.

TCC student Shirley Atkins, 35, said, "Really, we need the money for education more so than for homeland security."

Eric Feliciano, a TCC student who plans to study Russian, said education for the United States already lags behind the rest of the world.

"I guess (lawmakers) want us to continue that path," he said.

## TCC tries to limit the impact of budget cuts

By Angeline J. Taylor

DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

More students will be assigned to each class, retiring professors will be replaced with less experienced instructors and computers that may need replacement will have to stay in place.

Each are symptoms of Tallahassee Community College's budget cuts since administrators and trustees approved \$2.32 million in cuts creating a \$60 million budget for the 2008-2009 school year. But that isn't what worries administrators the most. They are more worried about the future.

"I don't want to be an alarmist," said Barbara Sloan, vice president of academic affairs at TCC.

Sloan said if another round of budget cuts hits TCC, administrators will have to look at what programs and personnel can be eliminated. Administrators already cut 3.5 percent more money than other state agencies were required to as requested by Gov. Charlie Crist. It was a move done in an attempt to be proactive, said TCC President Bill Law.

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Each faculty member received two additional students per class. But Sloan was quick to say that an abundance of students will not be added to classes. To do that, she said, would take away from TCC's core mission.

"Saying we'll (dramatically) raise class size means we'll lose revenue," Sloan said in describing TCC's role in bridging the gap for new high-school graduates and up-and-coming university upperclassmen.

Jerry Schilling, TCC's vice president for administrative services, said the critical equipment replacements will most likely get done.

"What we normally do is set aside enough to get us through the year," he said.

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"I guess (lawmakers) want us to continue that path," he said.

## TCC Learning Commons is a Success

*Reporter: Angela Salerno*

*Email Address: [angela.salerno@wctv.tv](mailto:angela.salerno@wctv.tv)*

18,000, that's the number of visits the new Tallahassee Community College Learning Commons has seen since it opened just a month ago.

Staff say the learning commons has been a hit with students, they're lining up at the doors before it even opens.

The commons offer a wide variety of services including tutors, advanced computer programs, study rooms, and practice test packages.

Students say before the learning commons was built they would study outside or in their cars, they say this provides a one stop shop.

TCC student, Darlene Mills said, "Time is of the essence, so you can come to one place and study everything. That's really beneficial."

TCC student, Archer Canobra said, "I can get the assistance from the other students in the class who usually have the same exact questions I have about the programs we are using."

Many students say the free services have helped improve their grades.

## Boyd gets research dollars for local campuses

By Angeline J. Taylor  
DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

U.S. Congressman Allen Boyd, D-North Florida, secured \$21.7 million to go to defense research projects for Florida State and Florida A&M universities and [Tallahassee Community College](#). The money was approved by President Bush on Tuesday night, Boyd said.

“Locally, it couldn’t be more positive,” Boyd said about the millions that will go to the institutions — \$8.5 million to FSU, \$12.4 million to FAMU and \$800,000 to [TCC](#).

Boyd said those millions “benefit our military but it also helps strengthen our schools’ reputations as leaders in research and innovation. I am proud to support this funding to facilitate the important work being done at FSU, FAMU and [TCC](#).”

Kirby Kemper, FSU vice president for research, said the money primarily goes for equipment and to pay researchers who work on the projects. He added that they are reviewed by the corresponding military agency.

“If we don’t deliver (the money gets) cut off,” he said.

The projects at FSU include a study on an all-electric warship for the Navy. One of the three FAMU projects includes research of advanced sensors and imaging systems for detection of improvised explosive devices. The [TCC](#) dollars will go to establishing a manufacturing and industrial technology center to provide training.

“This \$800,000 will go a very long way to completing that center,” said John Chapin, vice president of Economic and Workforce Development. “We are very excited. I can’t be more pleased with (Boyd’s) work on our behalf.”

## FSU Receives \$8.5 Million in Federal Funding

Email Address: [news@wctv.tv](mailto:news@wctv.tv)

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. -- Two Florida State University research centers that are working to develop new advanced materials and design new energy technologies for the U.S. military will receive \$8.5 million in federal funding under a bill signed into law by President George W. Bush.

FSU's Center for Advanced Power Systems will receive \$6.1 million and the university's High-Performance Materials Institute will receive \$2.4 million in funds that were included in the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act of 2009, a massive temporary spending bill that continues funding federal departments and agencies until March 6, 2009. The bill was approved by both houses of Congress last week and signed by the president on Sept. 29.

The Center for Advanced Power Systems' funding will go toward two research projects:

\$4.5 million for the project "Integration of Electro-Kinetic Weapons into the Next Generation of Navy Ships." This project supports the strategic development by the U.S. Navy of a "next-generation" warship -- an all-electric ship. FSU will use the funding to study future technologies and the requirements necessary to address the unique challenges associated with this goal.

\$1.6 million for the project "Integrated Cryo-Cooled High Power Density Systems." FSU will lead a multi-university program with the goal of achieving cryo-cooled, high-power densities to enhance the performance of military vehicles through the reduction of weight and improved efficiency.

"We are grateful for these funds that allow us to continue our work to support the Navy in its development of a new generation of electric ships," said Steinar Dale, director of the Center for Advanced Power Systems. "Our world-class capacities in modeling and simulation at CAPS help the industry and the Navy in creating the power systems needed for our improved national security. We appreciate the support from our congressional delegation and the Navy."

Meanwhile, FSU's High-Performance Materials Institute will receive \$2.4 million for the research project "Nanotubes Optimized for Lightweight Exceptional Strength (NOLES)/ Composite Materials." FSU will use this funding to continue researching and testing nanotube-reinforced composites with the goal of developing lightweight body armor, equipment and

vehicles for the military, using the strongest material known to humanity for maximum protection.

"The support we have received for the NOLES program will provide our students and faculty with the opportunity to advance the state of the art in nanomaterials and advanced composites for both defense and commercial applications," said Ben Wang, the Simon Ostrach Professor of Engineering at the Florida A&M University-Florida State University College of Engineering and director of the High-Performance Materials Institute. "For example, aircraft made with these nanomaterials and advanced composites will be lighter-weight, stronger, safer, more energy-efficient and durable. Through funding of the NOLES program and many other projects, HPMI is rapidly becoming the nation's best research center in advanced composites, which we believe will benefit the region by establishing and attracting new industries, offering high-paying employment opportunities."

U.S. Rep. Allen Boyd, who was instrumental in securing the funding for FSU, as well as for other defense-related projects at Florida A&M University and [Tallahassee Community College](#), said that "our colleges and universities play an integral role in our national defense efforts. Investing in our research programs not only benefits our military, but it also helps strengthen our schools' reputations as leaders in research and innovation. I am proud to support this funding to facilitate the important work being done at FSU, FAMU and [TCC](#)."

FSU Vice President for Research Kirby Kemper said Florida's congressional delegation was "absolutely critical" in helping Congress to acknowledge the importance of the three FSU projects to U.S. national security.

"Congressman Allen Boyd in the House was our stalwart supporter and made our case so effectively with his colleagues," Kemper said. "Both Florida senators, Bill Nelson and Mel Martinez, also pushed very effectively with their Senate colleagues for these efforts, which enhance both the Army's and Navy's ability to have the new knowledge and technologies related to our national defense. FSU is most grateful to their efforts and their continuing support of our research programs."

Visit [www.caps.fsu.edu](http://www.caps.fsu.edu) for more information on the Center for Advanced Power Systems; go to [www.hpmi.net](http://www.hpmi.net) to learn more about the High-Performance Materials Institute.

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## OUR OPINION

# Our recommendations

## Six amendments deserve your attention

While the presidential election is getting by far the most attention this fall, here in Florida we have several significant decisions to make on the Nov. 4 ballot.

Six constitutional amendments are up for consideration. All but one, the gay marriage ban, are less controversial than three proposals that were benched this summer by the Florida Supreme Court because of misleading ballot language. (Those had to do with a so-called "tax-swap" plan and a pair involving school vouchers.)

Each measure will require 60-percent voter approval to pass.

Here are the recommendations of the *Tallahassee Democrat's* editorial board on each of the six:

### Amendment 1

■ Repeal of alien land law. This eliminates antiquated language that originated in California in the early 1900s and was put in our constitution in 1926, authorizing the Legislature to prohibit "ineligible aliens" from owning property. It was intended to prevent Japanese farmers from leasing or owning property, and about a dozen states used this tactic.

Florida, to its credit, never used this anti-Asian, anti-immigrant authority, and this is the only amendment that lawmakers themselves sent to the ballot. This

outdated, discriminatory language should be out of our constitution. Vote Yes on Amendment 1.

### Amendment 2

■ Gay marriage ban. This is the only amendment initiated by a citizens' group, Florida4Marriage.org, and it would ban gay marriage and all civil unions. It also puts at risk health insurance and other benefits extended to domestic partnerships that are publicly recognized as the "substantial equivalent" of marriage regardless of the age, gender or sexual orientation of the parties.

Voters sympathetic to traditional marriages can be reassured that Florida statute already prohibits same-sex marriage and defines marriage as a legal union between "one man and one woman" — language echoed in this amendment. The federal Defense of Marriage Act also protects states from having to recognize gay marriages contracted elsewhere.

This amendment is nevertheless a duplicative, unnecessary means of privately objecting to cultural change and nontraditional families. We urge you to vote No on Amendment 2.

### Amendment 3

■ Hurricane and energy tax break. Homeowners, including those who own rentals, second homes or vacation homes, would get a small tax break for making storm-

hardening improvements (such as hurricane-resistant shutters, shingles, doors and windows) or for renewable energy systems such as solar.

The savings would come because, under this amendment, the improvements couldn't affect the assessed value for purposes of property taxes. The Legislature's financial impact estimates suggest an average savings of about \$15 for the 225,000 Floridians who would likely qualify, so it's not a lot of money, but it's good public policy and homeowners might also save on better insurance premiums and lower utility bills. Vote Yes on Amendment 3.

### Amendment 4

■ Conservation land tax break. Environmentalists like this tax break because it does two things to help preserve open lands. It creates a complete property tax exemption for conservation easements when a private landowner agrees to permanently set aside and not develop land, keeping it in its current state.

It also allows lawmakers to create a new tax-break class for land-owner managed "conservation" property that is similar to the "greenbelt" exemption for agricultural land. The amendment should overall help sustain agriculture in Florida by providing an alternative to "selling to development" at the same time preserving wilderness

areas that are essential to the well-being of the state's natural resources. Vote Yes on the new conservation tools provided in Amendment 4.

### Amendment 6

■ Working waterfront tax break. In our Gulf Coast region, Amendment 6 could be a blessing, providing a tax break for struggling marinas, boat yards, commercial fishing facilities and other waterfront fish houses or restaurants.

It would help because it would ensure that property is assessed according to its current use instead of by its "potential" use. In some areas of Florida, tax bills have soared because a waterfront parcel with a fish house was assessed as ideal for a high rise. Mom-and-pop owners of waterfront businesses wouldn't feel pressured to sell to keep up with "highest and best use" tax bills, and some of Florida's old charm, beloved by residents and appealing to tourists, could be retained. Vote Yes on Amendment 6.

### Amendment 8

■ Amendment 8: A new sales tax for community colleges. This is the only amendment proposed by the Taxation and Budget Reform commission that allows a tax increase rather than, as with Amendments 3, 4 and 6, tax breaks. No. 8 would give a county the option of increas-

ing its sales tax to support community colleges.

There's a five-year expiration date, but this amendment is nonetheless cumbersome: If a college served more than one county, all of the counties would have to agree to the same tax increase, and the state already limits local-option taxes to 1.5 percent total, so counties that are already at that limit couldn't chip in.

Florida statutes now allow local-option sales taxes for seven specific purposes, including infrastructure (like Blueprint 2000); public school capital outlay (like Leon County's half-percent); indigent health care; a public hospital; or public-health and safety projects.

Tallahassee Community College President Bill Law favors of this "opportunity for the voters of Florida to give community colleges an arrow in their quiver for a modest and temporary tax support."

But while it's true that community colleges do serve an important work-force function — extra important during times of economic distress — financing public education is one of the state Legislature's fundamental responsibilities. It ought not take a constitutional amendment, which shoves another burden back to counties, to ensure support of our community colleges. We recommend voting No on Amendment 8.

## Campus Notes

### Tallahassee Community College:

Scholarships offered to 45 students: Tallahassee Community College's Take Stock in Children (TSIC) and College Reach-Out Programs hosted its annual awards ceremony for new scholars on September 13. That evening, 45 students, grades 6-11, were awarded a scholarship and the opportunity to pursue a college education at TCC. Two different scholarships are made available through TSIC and CROP and are presented to low and lower-middle income, potential first generation-in-college students, grades six to 11. For more information on TSIC and CROP, call (850) 201-8314 or log on to [www.tcc.fl.edu/crop](http://www.tcc.fl.edu/crop).

TCC to offer conversational Arabic classes: Starting this month, Tallahassee Community College will offer conversational Arabic classes as part of Community College Initiative-Egypt, a program administered by Community Colleges for International Development. These classes are free to those who attend, and are going to be taught by four Egyptian students — Mervat Bebawy, Mohamed Sadek, Mohamed Ali and Mostafa Abdelkhalik. These students have earned a bachelor's degree in their native country of Egypt. During the 12-months they will be attending TCC they will study in the business management program. Two sessions will be offered: Wednesdays from Oct. 8 — Nov. 19 at 3 p.m. and Thursdays from Oct. 9 — Nov. 20 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call TCC's Office of International Student Services at (850) 201-8258.

Alumni Association seeking new members: Tallahassee Community College's Alumni Association began making calls this month to recruit new members. Benefits of joining the TCC Alumni Association include free entry to TCC athletics and TheatreTCC! Travel discounts from Cendant's University Alumni Travel Program are also offered. TCC alumni can call (850) 201-6065, e-mail [alumni@tcc.fl.edu](mailto:alumni@tcc.fl.edu) or visit <http://alumni.tcc.fl.edu> for further information.

## Bill Cotterell: State workers hope someone can deliver

*Bill Cotterell*  
Notebook

Of all the special interests that send their smiling, confident representatives to the Capitol's fourth floor, none is more in need — or more deserving — than state employees.

To say the state work force is taken for granted would be a bit of an overstatement, implying that legislators notice employees at all. They're mostly ignored, with any consideration of their salaries and benefits pushed off until the closing days of a session.

And for retirees, it's even worse. In a process that runs on leverage and influence, perhaps the only Floridians who get less respect than state workers are people who used to be state workers.

It's not as if employees could threaten to take their time and talent to some other government, although the state loses a lot of law-enforcement officers and other critical-skills employees to city and county government or to the private sector. In the current economic climate, budget-cutting legislators don't exactly want people to quit, but each one who does will leave behind one more FTE that may or may not be filled.

For budget-balancing purposes, all but the most critical vacancies will probably be kept for a while.

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees does what it can, with a lobbying team that is downtown every day of every session. AFSCME is no longer as lock-step Democratic as it used to be, but its influence is still limited.

The Police Benevolent Association, the university folks, the lawyers, doctors and the nurses seem to have a little better luck with their associations, year after year. But in recent sessions, even the PBA seems to have been playing defense, trying to protect the jobs of probation and prison officers more than getting improved benefits for them.

With everything going on in the economy, on top of the long-running downward spiral in the state's revenue collections, everybody knows that 2009 is going to be a bleak year for the budget. Gov. Charlie Crist has already ordered agencies to hold back 4 percent of their operating budgets, and the Revenue

Estimating Conference in November is expected to bring more bad news.

This means Tallahassee needs more than your typical lobbyist. With no pot of campaign contributions to spread around, no big blocs of votes to deliver, the advocates for state workers need to be real insiders — that is, literally inside the House and Senate.

Employees are losing a couple of champions with the term-limited departure of Reps. Curtis Richardson and Loranne Ausley, both Democrats from Tallahassee. Like AFSCME, they were voices of reason in the budget-whacking wilderness, speaking up for their constituencies as ex-Gov. Jeb Bush and the Republican Legislature set the agenda and carried it out, session after session.

Sen. Al Lawson, D-Tallahassee, will round out his 28-year legislative career as minority leader in the Senate. There might be one or two more votes in the Democratic caucus next session, but it's not going to be enough to change the attitude of budget managers toward state employees.

Started starkly, what's the political incentive for Republican legislators, when small businesses back home are laying off employees, if their constituents are fearful for their jobs, but state government isn't shedding any? You can imagine how long that's likely to last.

And never mind that state government is already small, that its ratios of employees to population and per-taxpayer cost of personnel annually rank 48th to 50th nationally. Nor does it matter that state employees haven't had a raise in nearly-bout forever.

Crist, to his credit, has been as supportive as fiscal realities permit. At least he hasn't demagogued about a big, bloated bureaucracy, as Republicans reflexively tend to do.

Working with Lawson in the Senate is Sen. Charlie Dean, R-Inverness, who also has a decent record with state workers. Dean, who won a special election last year when Sen. Nancy Argenziano went to the Public Service Commission, won a commendation from AFSCME for sponsoring legislation friendly to the work force.

He's being challenged again by Democrat Suzan Franks of Hernando. A big Democratic turnout might help her (turnout was dismal in the special election), but Dean doesn't appear to be in great political peril.

Tallahassee's two House seats, the ones Richardson and Ausley are leaving, have had some interesting contests. Alan Williams won a seven-way primary on Aug. 26 and now faces no-party challenger Robert Maddox and a write-in candidate, Rodney Davis, on Nov. 4.

The hotter race in the next four weeks will be between Democrat Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda and Republican Peter Boulware, with nonparty contender John Shaw also on the ballot. Ausley's district has the highest concentration of state workers in the state.

Shaw, Maddox and Moore may be sincere in their intentions, but there are no independents or write-ins in the Legislature. None of them is likely to be the first.

The Republicans have targeted District 9, helping Boulware raise a staggering \$300,000-plus for the race. If he wins it, GOP leaders will owe him — unless they feel like giving the seat back to the Democrats in two years.

Vasilinda, a lawyer who teaches at [Tallahassee Community College](#), has been a state employee since 1985. She'd raised only about half as much as businessman Boulware, according to Sept. 12 financial reports, but the district is overwhelmingly Democratic in registration.

It's unfortunate that, in the worst possible financial times, state employees will wind up with at least two first-term legislators next November. The new members will largely owe their elections to state workers but, at least for their first terms, it's going to be hard for them to deliver much.

Contact: Bill Cotterell at (850) 671-6545 or [bcotterell@tallahassee.com](mailto:bcotterell@tallahassee.com).

## Local manufacturers tackle job market

*Industry workers meet to discuss ways to combat economic issues, jobless rates*

By Kati Schardl

DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

More than two dozen members of the local manufacturing industry spent their lunch hour Tuesday sharing ideas and information to help combat problems with the economy and rising unemployment rates.

The manufacturers' roundtable was sponsored by the Tallahassee/Leon County Economic Development Council.

Jobs in Florida's manufacturing industry may have declined 8 percent since the economic slowdown began in earnest in June 2007, but the Big Bend is faring better than other regions in the state because of its manufacturing diversity, said Rob Cowan, human resources manager for General Dynamics Land Systems, host for the meeting.

"When we talk about grant opportunities with training dollars and when you talk about innovative programs like TCC does (with its training programs), that will bring more business to the area," Cowan said. "When you have a capable workforce, you draw more opportunities and business."

From building electronic components, automobile parts, machinery or products for the defense industry, Cowan said that diversity prevents this area from being dependent on cyclical industries. That point was reinforced as Cowan, and others, discussed hiring additional employees even in this tough economy.

One attendee even suggested training people who have lost construction jobs so they can secure manufacturing positions to meet local short-term demand.

Though it will not reap short-term dividends, local manufacturers are working with middle-school and high-school students through workshops and summer camps to encourage them to consider manufacturing positions.

Beth Mann Pace, Tallahassee Community College's project manager for manufacturing technology, was among those responsible for creating programs for students. Pace previously organized two successful manufacturing job fairs, and has noticed increased interest in manufacturing positions in the past year — by prospective employees and manufacturers.

"There are more people interested in manufacturing jobs because there are (now) more graduates looking for jobs," Pace said. "Manufacturers are looking for that niche person, so the more experience a candidate has, the more interested and encouraged manufacturers are about hiring them."

Contact business reporter Will Brown at (850) 599-2312 or [wbrown@tallahassee.com](mailto:wbrown@tallahassee.com).

# IN THE **Limelight**

## Things sure are fishy, fun in 'Greater Tuna'

By Will Brown

DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

Boy howdy, there sure is a whole lotta funny business going on under the dusty, small-town facade of teeny Tuna, the "third-smallest town in Texas"!

Thank goodness radio-show hosts Thurston Wheelis and Arles Struvie are on the air on station OKKK to keep us all informed with weather updates, news bulletins and rip-roarin' commentary.

The dubious doings of the denizens of Tuna are the meat and potatoes of the high-larry-us string of sketches that comprise "Greater Tuna." The play by Jaston Williams, Joe Sears and Ed Howard began life as a 1981 party skit based on a political cartoon in the Austin American-Statesman. The sly and slashing satire, which poked fun at the conservative climate in Reagan-era Texas, was such a huge hit that its creators fleshed it out into a stage play, which debuted off-Broadway in 1982 and was made into an HBO special by Norman Lear in 1984.

By 1985, Williams, Sears and Howard's baby had become the most-produced play in the country. It spawned two sequels, "A Tuna Christmas" and "Red, White and Tuna," and was staged at the White House in a command performance for President George H.W. Bush and Barbara Bush.

"Greater Tuna" is still wildly popular in the world of community theater, in part because of its well-balanced blend of affection and derision, and in part because it's easy to stage — all the roles are played by two people (Williams and Sears played the original dynamic duo of Struvie and Wheelis, respectively).

TheatreTCC! opens its season with a rollicking production of "Greater Tuna" that employs some of Tallahassee's finest comic acting talent. At Wednesday's preview performance, the chuckles gave way to guffaws, which morphed into belly laughs.

The production is directed by veteran local actor and director M. Derek Nieves and features Krystof Kage as Wheelis (and a host of other characters) and Michael Hardy as Struvie (ditto). The comedic timing of Kage and Hardy was nigh-on seamless and most impressive, considering the two are constantly changing costumes and characters and managed to not miss a beat or make a misstep.



Michael Hardy as Arles Struvie and Krystof Kage as Thurston Wheelis in "Greater Tuna." (CAROLINE V. STURTZ/Special to the Democrat)

Kage was particularly funny as Pearl Burras, the gray-haired matriarch whose passion is poisoning dogs with her "bitter pills" (biscuits dosed with strychnine) and Elmer Watkins, head of the Tuna KKK chapter. Hardy was a hit as used-weapon purveyor Didi Snavely, the whole tribe of Bumiller spawn (baby Jody, bad-boy Stanley and cheerleader-wanna-be Charlene) and snooty Vera Carp. He touched the heart and tickled the funny bone as sweet, gentle Petey Fisk, the local Humane Society representative.

Scenic designer Devin Kinch created a perfect setting for all the wacky action — an assemblage of trailers (including a vintage Airstream) decked out with perfect tatty details. And sound designer James Wright is, presumably, the person who should get kudos for the excellent incidental music.

## State House District 9: Boulware has edge in access

*Editorial*

Access is really the operative word in politics these days, and it's one thing that legislative newcomers typically lack. Newly elected state senators fare better than House members, because most have risen through the ranks and have their connections and allies on speed dial.

New House members often struggle for footing for quite some time, and in today's distressing economic climate, that can hobble a legislator unless he or she is armed with public policy wisdom and no small amount of charm and grit.

Even then, access to leadership remains the coin of the realm in the capital. Ask any lobbyist.

In the contest for House Seat 9, which is being vacated by Lorraine Ausley, we recommend Republican Peter Boulware to voters throughout this district, which serves parts of Jefferson and Leon counties and has been represented by Democrats for decades.

When the Democratic Party was in charge — and when parties weren't quite such hostile fortresses — that worked very well for the capital city. But the Republican party has been in control of the Legislature for more than a decade.

While Democrats might realistically gain three or four House seats this election, this district owes it to itself to see how it fares when the delegation mix includes a Republican, Mr. Boulware — who claims he is already ensured of "a seat at the table with leadership."

A businessman who is vice president of Legacy Toyota, Mr. Boulware enjoys name recognition as a former All American for the Florida State University Seminoles who became an outstanding NFL player for nine years with the Baltimore Ravens. He will enjoy immediate recognition and celebrity that quite simply opens doors.

With issues as important as economic diversity and support of our universities and state workers, having access as the budgets and bills are being drawn up — rather than trying to tack something on or vote yes or no later — is important. And despite strong efforts by our Democrat delegation, they haven't had that up-front advantage.

Today, Mr. Boulware says, his commitment is to his wife, young children and this community, specifically including the state work force.

"We need to give them something; we need to pay them what they deserve," he told the Democrat's editorial board this week. "At first I'd heard there was a lot of fat in government, but when I started looking at it, I found it's quite the opposite. (State agencies) operate on shoestring budgets ... and state employees have been passed over time and again."

Mr. Boulware faces Democrat Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda, a lawyer who teaches ethics and law at [Tallahassee Community College](#). She is an impressive campaigner with charm and grit who has worked long and hard to familiarize herself with issues and articulate some solutions to chronic concerns of this district.

Ms. Rehwinkel Vasilinda is interested in finding a dedicated source of funding for our universities, for example, and in much more responsible and respectful treatment of the state work force. She would finance these "investments" through collection of existing taxes, such as on Internet sales, by removing some current tax exemptions and by increasing cigarette taxes.

No Party Affiliate candidate John Shaw's name will also appear on this ballot for District 9.

Mr. Boulware has homework yet to do and could learn from Professor Rehwinkel Vasilinda about the intricacies of public policy, but he has the edge in his ability to bring attention to this district, whose concerns increasingly have played second fiddle to those of south and central Florida.

"I am confident of what I can bring to the district," Mr. Boulware said. "And I am confident a lot of Democrats think like me and have the same mentality I do. But I will have a seat at the table of leadership instead of in the back of the House."

We agree. Peter Boulware deserves this chance to show he can bring this North Florida region back into play.

## “Digital Harmony Project” Making a Difference for Students

Reporter: Krystin Goodwin

Students and their parents celebrated the 2nd annual “Digital Harmony Project,” at Nims Middle School, Saturday, as students are getting the tools they need to succeed.

Volunteers, sponsors, city officials, and educators joined forces at Nims Middle School, to kick off the 2nd year of the city’s “Digital Harmony Project.”

City officials coordinated with a wide range of local donors, as well as corporate sponsors, Dell and HP, to provide students with the technology they need to learn, both in, and out of the classroom.

“Total, we’ve probably had over \$ 100,000 worth of commitments, which is what it costs to run this program from year to year, and it costs the parents absolutely nothing,” said Tallahassee City Commissioner, Andrew Gillum.

All 6th grade students, and their parents, came prepared to take home more than 130 free, brand new personal computers.

“They’re just brand new computers, they’re giving away,” said Parent, Kisha Lewis.

Comcast Cable is also sponsoring the project, providing free Internet access in the households of all the 6th grade students.

[Tallahassee Community College](#) Professors held an instruction class, providing parents with skills on how to help their kids with their studies, while also getting some useful tips, on how to use and monitor the Internet.

Florida State University’s, Star Alliance group, helped parents load up, as kids watched in excitement.

“I feel so proud to type on my own computer, just to have one, and not go other places,” said Nims Middle School Student, Andrew Butler.

Organizers say it takes a community coming together to make a difference, as they break down technology barriers, to enable students to grow in their education, and in their future.

Nims middle school went from an “F” school to a “C” school last year.

Digital Harmony organizers say they hope to raise students’ FCAT scores, and earn the school an “A” grade this time around.

## Interested in a job in banking?

**TCC's Bank Teller Training Essentials** will help you prepare for the job *before* you interview!

The three-phase Bank Teller Training Essentials includes 6-hours of classroom instruction combined with an 8-hour online class.

**Classes begin November 4**

For more information

**(850) 201-8069**

[www.tcc.fl.edu/professionaldevelopment](http://www.tcc.fl.edu/professionaldevelopment)



*Students who successfully complete the training are invited to attend a mini job fair to interview with local banks that are hiring.*

## TCC's Speech and Debate Team Starts Season Strong

### TCC News Release:

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (October 8, 2008) - Fifteen members of Tallahassee Community College's Speech and Debate Team brought home a Team Sweepstakes victory from its most recent tournament, which took place at Florida Southern College in Lakeland, Fla.

En route to the victory, Team TCC bested a pair of state rivals - The University of Florida and Florida State University, who placed second and third, respectively.

"This is the largest travel squad we've fielded in years," said Eva Nielsen-Parks, Assistant Director of Forensics, "and it took the entire team to outpace the (Florida) Gators. It speaks of both the depth and breadth of our team."

Despite the size of its roster, Team TCC returns only two students from the highly successful 2007-08 season - team captains Alexa Kyros and Will Parente, both of whom have already garnered a first place finish in Pentathlon, the individual sweepstakes category, in 2008-09.

During September's Capital City Classic, hosted by TCC, Parente claimed first place in Pentathlon while Kyros followed in second. The order of finish was reversed at the Florida Southern tournament, where Kyros claimed the top spot.

"The leadership they (Kyros and Parente) have shown thus far is very impressive," said John Schultz, Director of Theatre and Forensics. "Not only have they worked hard to refine their own events, but they have been selfless in helping the novice students achieve success."

Through two tournaments, Team TCC has enjoyed tremendous success, placing multiple competitors in the finals of the 12 events that make up each competition. During the Capital City Classic, 15 students earned a total of 25 spots in the elimination rounds while 11 students tallied 21 berths in the finals at Florida Southern.

Schultz credits two elements to the team's widespread success - the addition of Parliamentary Debate into the curriculum, which has provided power for the College in debate and limited preparation events, and the generous financial support from Department of Campus Life and the Student

Government Association, which has enabled the team to field more students, resulting in a greater opportunity for student success.

On Friday, October 10, Team TCC will travel to its annual competition at the University of Alabama, where it has won the junior college division each year it has participated.

Notable results from the TCC Capital City Classic:

Pentathlon: 1st Place - Will Parente, 2nd Place - Alexa Kyros, 4th Place - Jessica Byler, 5th Place - Erin Stack, 6th Place - Shelly Searcy

Parliamentary Debate Semifinal Closeout (top 4 teams at the competition): Ed Rankin/Joe Fuentes, Alex Smith/Will Parente, Merick Lewin/Ali Wright and Shira Brownstein/Erin Stack  
Event Champions: Dramatic Interpretation - Meg Goertzen; Duo Interpretation - Alex Smith/Jessica Byler.

Notable results from Florida Southern College:

Pentathlon: 1st Place - Alexa Kyros, 2nd Place - Will Parente, 3rd Place - Erin Stack, 5th Place - Jessica Byler.

2008-09 TCC Forensics Team

Will Parente, Captain  
Alexa Kyros, Captain  
Josh Bradt  
Shira Brownstein  
Jessica Byler  
Carter Crisp  
Shamari Feaster  
Joe Fuentes  
Meg Goertzen  
Sean Greene  
Landon Hughes  
Merick Lewin  
Ed Rankin  
Shelly Searcy  
Alex Smith  
Erin Stack  
Juliet Whiddon  
Ali Wright

## Florida Department of Education Awards Five Adult Education Grants to TCC

### *TCC News Release:*

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (October 15, 2008) – Tallahassee Community College received five grant awards totaling \$326,619 from the Florida Department of Education to provide adult education and family literacy services in Gadsden, Leon and Wakulla Counties.

“These programs will help over 1,200 adults attain the basic skills they need to be productive workers and citizens,” said Dr. William D. Law Jr., TCC President. “We appreciate the Florida Department of Education’s strong support for these important programs.”

The programs emphasize basic skills such as reading, writing, math, English language competency and problem-solving. Adult education programs provide the following types of instruction:

- 1) Adult Basic Education (ABE) is instruction in basic skills for adults functioning at the lower literacy levels to just below the high school level;
- 2) Adult Secondary Education (ASE) is instruction for adults whose literacy skills are at approximately the high school level and who are seeking to pass the General Educational Development (GED) tests or obtain an adult high school credential; and,
- 3) English Literacy (EL) is instruction for adults who lack proficiency in English and who seek to improve their literacy and competence in English. English literacy instruction is integrated with civics education.

“Education is a lifelong process that requires careful cultivation, especially for adults who need skills to get jobs and become self-sufficient,” President Law said.

The grant program is funded through the federal Workforce Investment Act Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. It provides supplemental funds for adult basic education, high school subjects, English as a second language, citizenship, English literacy and civics education.

This program is a pay-for-performance grant, meaning grant amounts were based on adult student learning gains. Grantees must gather information on the learners, take attendance, assess their progress and complete other objectives to prove students are completing and learning the coursework. The money may be used for instructional costs, teacher salaries, textbooks, instructional supplies, facilities maintenance, childcare and transportation for learners.

For information about participation in these programs, please contact the TCC Economic & Workforce Development Division at (850) 201-8760.

## Our Opinion: 2nd Congressional District: Boyd has shown a steady hand

U.S. Rep. Allen Boyd, serving North Florida's rambling 2nd Congressional District for 12 years, has hardly had time to campaign for re-election this summer and fall.

Soaring gas prices started undermining the economy and rattling the confidence of voters and consumers even before the U.S. House and Senate were confronted with the most urgent and arguably most risky votes of their political careers, the financial rescue package adopted Oct. 3.

Mr. Boyd earlier had responded to our \$4-per-gallon gas ordeal, setting to work on what he calls "responsible domestic drilling" and exploration programs along with development of alternative-fuel research and development. He also was on the side arguing for legislation to stop oil speculation that, in his view, was "distorting energy markets" that led to unnerving gas prices.

Perhaps it is coincidental that, just before election time, President Bush signed on a \$21.7 million defense-research package that Mr. Boyd had steered through Congress for Florida State and Florida A&M universities and [Tallahassee Community College](#). Politics aside, it couldn't have come at a better time or been more positive a statement about the importance of our higher-education institutions in research and innovation.

Most recently, however, Mr. Boyd voted in favor of the plan that was first dubbed a "bailout" and then, after revisions in response to taxpayer outcry, a "rescue" that would start on Wall Street but on a path that is intended to ultimately wind back to Main Street.

As Mr. Boyd wrote on our opinion pages Sunday, in the days leading up to the vote, he met with many economic experts from many schools of thought and ideology "and all agreed the consequences of inaction would be devastating."

Knowing his vote wouldn't be popular with all or perhaps even many voters, he nonetheless joined the conservative-to-moderate Blue Dog Democrats in the House in supporting legislation they believe will allow the federal government to ultimately make a profit on the assets it acquires and sells in the rescue, but if it doesn't the financial industry will be required to repay the taxpayers in full.

As Nov. 4 nears, voters in this district have a choice of continuing to support Mr. Boyd, who has been a steady hand for the district for many years, or to start afresh with Panama City Republican Mark Mulligan, who holds three degrees including his doctorate from Florida State University and brings an academic's research-oriented approach to public policy issues.

Mr. Mulligan, a sixth-generation Floridian, is no doubt a sincere and intelligent candidate, but during such unnerving economic times we question the wisdom of changing horses in the middle of the stream. And we trust Mr. Boyd, whose family roots run deep in the rural agriculture regions of North Florida, will likely not be offended by the metaphor.

As work on that critical vote approached, Mr. Boyd told the editorial board of the Democrat, "You saw government react to a crisis in a way that it should, in a bipartisan way." He said that his colleagues in very tough elections mostly voted against the rescue plan, adding he felt he had to support it "but not with a smile on my face."

We urge voters of the 2nd District to support Mr. Boyd's re-election, and Mr. Boyd to keep the pressure on his colleagues to use this crisis as the impetus to continue strengthening fiscal and monetary policies that have taken our nation to the brink and overshadowed virtually all other concerns that a normal election season would address.

## TCC Partners with Raa

*K. Lakin*

All 500 Raa students enrolled in performing arts classes were invited to a Medieval Performance provided recently by students and staff of TCC's Humanities Department. The performance was part of TCC's partnership with Raa which has benefitted our students in learning more about medieval history, our first semester interdisciplinary theme. Students were treated to musical and historical presentations allowing them to travel back in time. We applaud TCC and their continued support of the academics and arts at Raa.