



Five years: Showing some sense

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Do city officials really need to drive city-owned cars?

General Counsel Cindy Laquidara turned hers in. She told the City Council Finance Committee last week that she has a car. Later, she told The Times-Union that the idea of driving it made her feel uncomfortable, given the budget situation this year.

In fact, she also eliminated an office manager's position that saved about \$90,000 a year, and she has made staff adjustments that also should save money.

If more city officials would act as if they were running a family business, then the city would not be in such dire financial straits.

Good for her.

Local woman runs group

Shar Ciambella Donovan of Jacksonville is the new president of the Florida Medical Association Alliance.

The alliance, according to its website, advocates on health care issues and also "enriches community health by focusing on patient education."

Donovan, a Jacksonville resident since 1999, was president of the Duval County Medical Society Alliance in 2003. She also previously held several offices with the statewide group prior to becoming its president-elect a year ago.

The alliance has an important task. It's good to know that Donovan is in charge.

Investigator honored

More than 150 investigators work for public defender offices in Florida - and the very best, according to a statewide organization,

is Jacksonville native David Douglas.

He recently was selected by the Florida Public Defender Association as its Investigator of the Year.

Douglas has a bachelor's degree from the University of North Florida and a juris doctorate from Vanderbilt University.

He spent 13 years as an attorney - in private practice and as a prosecutor - before joining the Fourth Judicial Circuit's Nassau County office.

In January 2009, he was moved to the Jacksonville office.

A news release says Public Defender Matt Shirk, in a letter nominating Douglas for the award, wrote: "He's thorough. He's very organized. He stays late and works weekends, if necessary.

"But I think his real asset is his compassion and dedication to the clients that we represent.

"He will always go above and beyond the call of duty and will do it because of his passion for justice."

That's the key word - justice.

If a person has committed a violent crime, he should be behind bars. But no reasonable person wants an innocent person in prison.

Douglas' job is to find the pertinent facts, something that's necessary for true justice.

It's good to know that he does that job well.

UNF program achieves

Good news for Masters of Health Care Administration students at the University of North Florida: Their program has earned the highest accreditation.

The Virginia-based Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education's assessment is considered a benchmark; a high accreditation means the program meets high standards - and, thus, its graduates are well positioned to do their jobs and do them well.

The MHA program is a pathway to high salaries.

Indeed, a UNF news release says, "Alumni of the master's program report salaries that average over \$68,000, with the highest being \$150,000, during their third year following graduation."

As has happened many times in the past, it has been shown that an education at UNF is a good investment in a successful career.

Honors for ElderSource

ElderSource, the Area Agency for Aging for Northeast Florida, received one of the nine Aging Innovations Awards at the national association in July.

Its virtual tour of services on a DVD was not only creative, but helped cross the gap for those with low literacy.

The agency said in a press release that the award is recognition for innovative ways to assist older adults, a fast-growing group.

Also, ElderSource received two other awards. One was for a program aimed at preventing suicide, which is a risk for the elderly.

ElderSource is the one-stop shop for seniors and their caregivers in Northeast Florida.

ElderSource helps you find information, resources and services. For more information, go to the website: www.myeldersource.org.

Links:

[1] <http://www.myeldersource.org>