

# The Mayor Speaks

**“Together, We Can!”**



## A Message from the Mayor

My fellow residents, I hope that all is well with you in our wonderful city. This newsletter represents my campaign promise to keep you informed of the progress we are making in City Hall on your behalf. What is important to me, as your mayor, is that I continue to be your voice — for both your pain and your gain. I ask for your prayers and continued support because, together, we can make a difference. We can put people before politics, we can ensure Democracy and we can bring about a spirit of progress and unity in this city. Together, we will continue to put people back to work, bring down the crime rate and fight for affordable housing, responsible redevelopment and adequate health care. As you'll read in these pages, we are already making good progress on many of these fronts; and I owe much of it to you. You were the genesis of many of these initiatives, and you fully supported others. For that, I will be forever grateful. I love being your mayor!

*Mayor Thomas A. Masters*

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**Listen to the Mayor on radio WJFP FM 107.1 every Friday from 1 – 2 p.m.**

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Want to reach the mayor? Call Mayor Masters at 561-845-4145; email him at [Mayormasters@rivierabch.com](mailto:Mayormasters@rivierabch.com); or write him at 600 W. Blue Heron Blvd., Riviera Beach, FL 33404.

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### **Getting the City Back to Work, Back to Success**

The late, great mayor of Detroit, Coleman Young, once said there was nothing wrong with the industrial city that 50,000 jobs couldn't fix. The message: if a city is working, that city thrives.

That would seem to be the message of the mayor of this city, Thomas A. Masters, who has, for the last year, been leading an effort to put as many Riviera Beach residents back to work as possible. Each Thursday at noon, the Mayor hosts a Job Fair at City Hall that attracts dozens of unemployed residents.

The Mayor's office also sponsored in June a two-day Youth Job Summit—an event Masters started four years ago, before he ran for political office—that attracted nearly 600 young people, aged 16 to 21. The first day focused on job preparation and on the second day, three dozen employers came—and they brought with them potential jobs for those ready and willing to work.

Masters has been working jointly with Workforce Alliance, which usually brings its mobile job unit on Thursdays to City Hall, and several local resource organizations. Again, employers — such as labor unions, Marriott and McDonald's — show up almost each week with real jobs. Some interview on the spot.

Ex-convict William Russell got hired at Days Inn on 45<sup>th</sup> Street, thanks to the job fair. It was a Godsend, Russell said. "If it had not been for the job fair," he said, "I would still be looking for a job."

"This is what I mean when I talk about 'putting people to work,'" Masters said. "It is crucial for the success of this city in the long run."

Several city leaders—including City Clerk Carrie Ward, Council Chairman Cedrick A. Thomas, City Manager Bill Wilkins, and John Williams, the director of parks and recreation—have attended the job fairs and youth summit to lend their support. The weekly job workshops have served hundreds of applicants seeking employment.

*The Mayor's Job Fair is held at noon each Thursday in the City Council Chambers, on the second floor of City Hall. Call 561-845-4145 for more information.*

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### **Twenty-six thousand pounds of food, medical supplies arrive in Haiti**

In late April, Mayor Thomas Masters visited the impoverished nation of Haiti with the Rev. Jesse Jackson and learned that the island's poor were starving. By May 1, Masters had launched a plan: to collect as much food as possible in as short a time as possible.

He got it done. Thanks to countless donors and volunteers, a 40-foot trailer containing 26,000 pounds of dry foods such as rice, beans and powdered milk arrived in St. Mark, Haiti, on August 18. The food had been separated by community volunteers into 2,150 individual care packages for distribution to the suffering. St. Mary's Hospital in West Palm Beach also donated six boxes of simple medical supplies.

Mayor Masters, along with Port Commissioner Wayne M. Richards and a small delegation flew to Haiti to help distribute the food. Lake Worth-based World Harvest Missions, which supports a remote health clinic in a tiny village called Pestel, also helped with the distribution of food and medical supplies.

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### **Get Your Pizza Pie Here!**

There has been a long history of redlining in Riviera Beach when it comes to pizza delivery. In the 80's, the Rev. Thomas Masters successfully pushed for the three major pizza delivery chains — Pizza Hut, Papa John's and Domino's — to send their drivers into the city for the first time.

Then, apparently, they stopped full city delivery. Again.

Now, Mayor Thomas Masters has done it again. Masters met recently with the management of Papa John's Pizza in North Palm Beach to start immediate daytime delivery again in the entire city. The Mayor is confident that once this stage proves successful, night time delivery will also begin.

*To place your delivery order, call Papa John's Pizza, 216 U.S. Highway One, at 561-881-7270.*

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**A City Heading in the Right Direction!**

## **Multi-pronged attack on crime is working**

The city's teen curfew, vigilant neighborhood crime watch groups, more and better organized police on the streets—all of these efforts, and surely others, have combined to lower Riviera Beach's overall crime rate by nearly 16 percent since last year, according to the most recent police figures.

Have you been missing in action? Are you being vigilant on your street, and in your neighborhood? Are you being the eyes and ears of the police when they're not around? If you see anyone breaking the law, anywhere in the city, please call the police immediately. We, all of us, must send a clear message to criminals that we won't give them safe haven.

Ever wonder why you see young men hanging on street corners in some neighborhoods, but not in others? It's *tolerance*. Those young men locate where they know residents will tolerate their being there.

Intolerance does not mean being stupid. Don't go out to confront them; call the police. If the offenders return, call again,. *Don't give up and don't get mad with the police. They're on your side!* They are just as frustrated with "the way things are" as you are.

Mayor Thomas A. Masters, who is primarily responsible for the city's teen curfew, thinks the ordinance has helped create safety and order. So does Officer Quenton Jacobs, who works primarily in Monroe Heights.

The curfew is working, he said, "because you [parents] know where they are at all times and it gives them less of a chance to actually get into any kind of trouble."

The ordinance requires that everyone under age 18 be at home by 11 p.m. during the week and by midnight on the weekend—unless they have a valid explanation for being out, such as family emergencies and work obligations.

"Young people must be both kept out of harm's way and, if they've got devilment on their minds, kept away from temptation. That's why this curfew is critical," the Mayor said.

Resident Kita Demps agrees. "Since this curfew has been in effect," she said, "I just have not seen that many kids hanging out on the streets. I have seen a real noticeable change."

*For more information on crime statistics or the curfew, call the Riviera Beach Police Department at 561-845-4128.*

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## **Supervision at the Parks**

If indeed 'It Starts in Parks,' then the push by the mayor, other elected officials and community leaders , including Dan Calloway, to have more and better supervised activities for children in families in parks makes sense. The discussions have been fruitful, and the mayor is hopeful that, within a year, this goal can be fully obtained. Bill Contole says, "This is a must."

*Tell the mayor what you think. Email him at [Mayormasters@rivierabch.com](mailto:Mayormasters@rivierabch.com) or call him at 561-845-4145.*

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*He who knows and knows that he knows is wise; follow him. He who knows not and knows not that he knows not is a fool; shun him. He who knows not that he knows, is a child; teach him. A Chinese Proverb*

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## **Saving Our Tax Dollars, Getting a Free Concert?**

From the dais, Mayor Thomas A. Masters has made his position clear on the Riviera Beach Music Festival, formerly known as the Jazz and Blues Festival on the Beach. Now, he wants to speak directly to city residents. The mayor asks Did You Know:

- That the festival has lost more than \$2 million in its eight-year existence?
- Should dozens of city employees be asked to put the festival together, while continuing to do their city jobs as best they can? This is not fair to our city employees, city residents and department heads to do two jobs at the same time!
- That the festival churns up so much staff time during the last few weeks of organizing that city business seemingly comes to a virtual halt?
- That attendance has declined in recent years, including 2008?

"Not another dime of taxpayer money should be spent on this event," Masters said. "It needs to be fully funded by sponsors, not this city's taxpayers."

The mayor recommends that the music festival's expenses be paid in advance. Residents should be able to attend for free, with profits going to pay for much-needed services and programs.

"The number 8 means change and new beginnings. After eight years of this music festival, isn't it clearly time for a change in direction?" Masters said.

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### **Congressman Ron Klein**

Congressman Ron Klein paid a visit to Riviera Beach City Hall August 13 to meet with Mayor Thomas Masters. He came to the Mayor with news of a possible new business coming to town, and toured the Ocean Mall redevelopment with City Council Chairman Cedrick A. Thomas, Council Pro-tem Dawn S. Pardo and Councilwoman Lynne L. Hubbard. Klein also visited the city police department to check out communications equipment purchased with federal money he helped procure.

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### **'Pull Up Your Pants,' residents say in overwhelming vote**

In March 2008, 73 percent of city residents approved passage of an ordinance ruling that it be illegal for anyone to walk around Riviera Beach dressed in the popular, yet indecent, 'saggy pants' style.

The vote followed a successful referendum drive led by Mayor Thomas A. Masters, who found he'd hit a raw nerve coursing throughout the city.

"People were tired," Masters recalled, "tired of seeing these young men and women with their underwear showing, their buttocks showing from underneath their clothes. It was disrespectful, it looked bad and people said 'that's it.' People feel they should have the right to set the public standards of decency in this community."

The new ordinance is now in effect, and it requires anyone wearing saggy pants below the waist in public that exposes their skin or undergarments — no matter their age or gender — to 'pull 'em up.'

The first violation gets community service or a fine of \$150, the second violation and subsequent offenses rate community service or a fine of \$300. If it is then determined that a person is a habitual offender, then that person may face up to 60 days in jail for not paying the fines or completing community service. First-time juvenile offenders may be diverted to the city's neighborhood accountability board without any fines or judicial proceedings.

"If you see anyone violating this ordinance and any other city ordinance," Masters said, "please call the police. If you have children, please let them know that wearing their pants below their waists, exposing their skin will not be tolerated."

City Police Counsel Matthew Russell said police officers will be trained in the requirements of the new ordinance. Police officers will be able to recognize violations, apply administrative definitions, understand enforcement policy and prepare cases for successful prosecution, he said.

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"I have no doubt that our officers will follow the law to bring about the compliance that we all desire," Russell said.



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### **City offers academic study, jobs for youth in annual summer camp**

Since 1996, the City of Riviera Beach has sponsored a free academic summer camp for middle school-aged children. It was founded by former Councilwoman Cinthia Becton when the School District of Palm Beach County discontinued offering summer camp for middle school children.

The camp, which was held at Suncoast Community High School this year, is usually held on the campus of John F. Kennedy Middle Magnet School. It is open to city residents and offers not only academic enrichment, but also classes in the arts, recreation, and culture. College-aged young men and women are paid to work as counselors.

Funds to pay for the camp came from a police forfeiture fund, private donors and city partners.

The all-day camp began June 16, and ended July 25. For information on next year's camp, call 561-841-4990.

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### **Other City Council activities**

Besides Mayor Thomas A. Masters, several city legislators have initiatives and projects they're working on. They include:

- Councilwoman Dawn S. Pardo is working with legislators and others to ensure the city beach is safe, beautiful and public.

- Councilwoman Judy L. Davis is collecting donations for an Army unit serving in Iraq that she's adopted. Call Councilwoman Davis' office at 561-845-4095 for more information.
  - Councilwoman Lynne L. Hubbard is continuing her "Register Riviera!" campaign to increase voter education, registration and civil rights restoration throughout the city. For more information, call Councilwoman Hubbard's office at 561-845-4095.
  - Councilman Shelby L. Lowe led a 10-person delegation to a national conference on making communities more equitable, and is planning a follow-up conference on the topic to be held September 25-27. For more information, call Councilman Lowe's office at 561-845-4095.
  - Chairman Cedrick A. Thomas continues to work with the Mayor and other community leaders regarding special projects for children, quality redevelopment and other needed services.
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### **Renaming of City Streets**

Several of our residents agree with Mayor Thomas A. Masters and other city officials that we need to consider renaming some of our city streets. Is it shameful that most of our streets are named after "numbers" or "alphabets"? Should we wait for people to die before we name streets or buildings accordingly? The mayor and other residents feel that we should rename some of our streets after local and national trailblazers and others worthy of such note. The first trailblazer that the mayor has recommended to the council is long-time community activist Herman McCray. Every resident that the Mayor visited on 25<sup>th</sup> Court has signed a petition supporting the renaming their street after McCray. Give me my flowers while I am alive! If you would like to suggest other names, please contact the Mayor's office. The City Charter provides for the mayor to make recommendations to the council.

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### **Record Number of Residents Win City Scholarship**

The Mayor and City Council presented city scholarships to 29 city residents on July 14<sup>th</sup>.

This year's scholarships were funded by donations from the Police Department's Law Enforcement Trust Fund, MASUD Temple #69, National Village Neighborhood Association, Daszkal Bolton, the former John H. Perry Aquarium Project, and Jayson Young (a former scholarship winner who has funded one scholarship each year for the last 3 years).

The Riviera Beach City Council established the City of Riviera Beach Education Scholarship Program in 1998 to encourage city residents to further their education. It initially provided ten (10) \$500 scholarships that were funded out of the Police Department's Law Enforcement Trust Fund (Fines & Forfeiture Fund). In 2001 the scholarship award amount was increased from \$500 to \$1,000 per person.

Scholarships are awarded to entering college freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The City of Riviera is one of the few organizations that awards at all classification levels. Many organizations only award scholarships to incoming freshmen. In order to apply, an applicant must be a city resident with a minimum 2.0 cumulative Grade Point average. Qualifying applicants are ranked based upon academic accomplishments, community service, and need.

Previous years' scholarships have been funded by the police Law Enforcement Trust Fund (\$76,000); Palm Beach Casino Cruise Line (\$22,000); Nealia B. Cunningham Family Trust (\$1,000 per year since 2003); Jason Young (a previous scholarship winner - \$1,000 per year since 2006); National Village Homeowner's Association (\$1,000 per year since 2007); MASUD Temple #69 (\$2,000); and several other city business partners.

**Scholarships have been awarded as follows:**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
1998	10	500	\$5,000
1999	10	500	\$5,000
2000	10	500	\$5,000
2001	10	1,000	\$10,000
2002	10	1,000	\$10,000
2003	11	1,000	\$11,000
2004	14	1,000	\$14,000
2005	15	1,000	\$15,000
2006	24	1,000	\$24,000
2007	26	1,000	\$26,000
2008	29	1,000	\$29,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$154,000</b>

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**“Together We Can!”**

### **Mayor provides free book bags for city children**

Mayor Thomas A. Masters, Pastor James Adams of Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church and a host of other community partners gave away 500 backpacks to children in Riviera Beach — just in time for school August 18.

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### **Off to Denver**

Mayor Thomas A. Masters attended the Democrat National Convention, August 25<sup>th</sup> - August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008, to witness the historic nomination of Barack Obama, the first African-American candidate to become the Democratic Party's nominee for President of the United States.

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*This newsletter is privately funded. An official newsletter from the City of Riviera Beach is expected in the near future. Please log on to the city's website at [www.rivierabch.com](http://www.rivierabch.com) for more information, city news and current events.*