

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

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EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

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*Section 8*

*Thomas “Tom” J. Hutka*

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager  
Candidate Report*

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*Cover Letter and Resume*

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## Section 8

Thomas J. Hutka

1300 S. Ocean Blvd, #704  
Pompano Beach, FL. 33062  
954-501-3626  
[tjhutka@yahoo.co](mailto:tjhutka@yahoo.co)

June 18, 2021

City Commission  
City of Lake Worth Beach

Dear Mayor Resch and Commissioners,

After seeing your listing on the ICMA and Colin Baenziger & Associates websites, I am very interested in the position of City Manager. The challenges described fit extremely well with the skills I've built over many years in community leadership roles — right here in Florida.

I have worked in literally all aspects of community government, and developed a track record of proven management skills based on participatory leadership and professional innovation. Having worked my way up through the ranks, I also have hands-on experience in the day-to-day operations of the very best local governments, especially in support of neighborhood preservation, stable growth management and sustainable economic investment.

My portfolio of successful management initiatives has relied on fostering excellent working relationships with elected officials, citizens, employees, the news media, private companies and other government agencies. Communication and consensus building are the keys to my implementing many diverse initiatives. Under my watch, complex government operations are run like efficient profitable businesses, but with respect for each individual employee and citizen. In all cases, my results-oriented successes are marked by strict but reasonable financial decisions, operational efficiency, and emphasis on quality customer service.

As you can see, I am excited about the position, and working for you and with the citizens of Lake Worth Beach. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,



Tom Hutka

**THOMAS J. HUTKA**

(954) 501-3626

tjhutka@yahoo.com

1300 South Ocean Blvd. #704, Pompano Beach, FL 33062

### EDUCATION:

Harvard University, Master Public Administration (land planning, public finance).  
Princeton University, BSE Civil Engineering (structural, water/wastewater).  
Florida State University, Certified Public Manager program.

### EXPERIENCE:

#### City Manager: Port Huron, MI

Championed dynamic public-private partnerships to fully re-energize a great, but recently stagnant community, honored with All America City award. Implemented "Downtown Action Plan" to rebuild streetscapes, attract new investment, and reduce downtown vacancy from 40% to 8%. Greenhouse gas emissions reduced through active energy conversions and wastewater treatment process improvements. Completed — with minimal neighborhood disruption — reconstruction of city's water, sewer, stormwater and street infrastructure (US-EPA's nation-wide excellence award). Enlisted the collaborative efforts of regional governments, corporate sponsors and citizen volunteers as recognized with Municipal League's Greatest Innovations award. Led management team to Thomas Edison Business Award for creating exceptional work environment. 2001 to 2006.

"Hutka Helped Port Huron to Become Better. Hutka is a leader. There is no question Hutka made a difference. He reached out to a variety of community leaders and set a standard of cooperation. The City's progress was substantial enough to win state and national recognition. On Hutka's watch . . . he did much to help the city achieve. That type of leadership is hard to find . . . outstanding city manager."

— Port Huron Times Herald

#### Director of Public Works: Broward County, FL

Led Capital Projects, Solid Waste & Recycling, Facilities Management, Streets & Bridges, Traffic Engineering, and Water & Wastewater Operations and Finance. Served on Climate Change Task Force, Complete Streets Team, Fort Lauderdale International Airport Expansion Committee, and Convention Center/Hotel Team. Nationally recognized energy reduction program. All projects LEED Gold, including one of AIA's Best Ten Buildings in State. Greatly increased efficiencies and service quality, even while implementing ERP and reducing expenditures. 2009 to 2020.

#### Director of Municipal Program Management: HNTB Corporation, Indianapolis

Consultant to local governments, managing capital improvement programs and enhancing funding sources. Clients included South Bend, IN (Notre Dame University), Town of Speedway, IN (Indy 500 racetrack), City of Dallas, Hillsborough County, FL and other municipalities. 2006 to 2009.

#### Deputy County Manager: Osceola County, FL

Directed all elements of growth management: development review, land use planning, public works, capital program, engineering, solid waste, and code enforcement for this high-growth area which includes Walt Disney World. Implemented green initiatives, concurrency planning and smart growth measures for Disney's Town of Celebration and other nationally-recognized sustainable developments. Many first-time initiatives: energy savings, personnel management training, one-stop permitting, land development code, long-term financial planning, capital project cost/schedule controls, management information systems, parks/recreation master plan, and inaugural solid waste collection service. Extensive construction program included major league baseball park renovation, rodeo/fair complex, jail, courthouses, offices, libraries, parks and highways. 1997 to 2001.

#### Associate County Administrator: Hennepin County (Minneapolis)

Directed IT, purchasing, finance, accounting, investments, budget, facilities and public works programs for one of the county's largest governments. As member of the County's Executive Team, led one of the nation's most advanced social service and health care systems. Developed County-

## Section 8

wide strategic planning initiatives: performance measurement, employee evaluation and total quality management (NACO Excellence Award winners). Implemented comprehensive cost/benefit priority analysis for all capital expenditures-producing \$50 million in cost savings. Maintained one of the few public AAA bond ratings. 1994 to 1996.

### Commissioner of Engineering and Construction: City of Cleveland, OH

Led capital re-development improvements, public works maintenance, and development review for America's premier economic renaissance. Successfully completed – on time and on budget – City's largest infrastructure program in support of major league sports facilities, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, State Aquarium, light rail line, waterfront parks, and neighborhood revitalization. Established City's reputation for professionalism and honesty with local private industry. Nationally recognized successes based on award-winning public/private partnerships, regional government partnerships, large state and federal grants, and innovative privatization. 1992 to 1994.

### Bond Rating Specialist: Standard and Poor's, New York, NY

Expert analysis of municipalities' management, budgeting and financial planning. Specialized in operation and management of public water, sewer and solid waste utilities. Experienced with entire range of public finance options. This training has helped increase bond ratings for every agency I led.

### **LEADERSHIP POSITIONS:**

Economic Development Alliance of St. Clair County, Executive Board Member.  
Downtown Development Authority of Port Huron, Board Member.  
Blue Water Habitat for Humanity, Jimmy Carter Work Project, Board Chair.  
Port Huron Neighborhood Housing Corporation, Board Member.  
Volunteer of the Year Award, MainStreet Port Huron.  
Rotary Club, Board of Directors, President Elect.  
United Way of Broward County, Broward County (agency) Chair.

### **PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS:**

"Mechanics of Coastal Sand Erosion," Senior Thesis.

"Local Government Public-Private Partnerships," National Council Public-Private Partnerships Annual Conference.

"How to Improve Your Capital Bond Rating," Training session for State of Colorado employees.

"Rebuilding Infrastructure with Public/Private Partnerships," American Public Works Association International Exposition.

"Cost Requirements of the Safe Water Act for Cities," Credit Week magazine.

"Neighborhood Conservation Policy Alternatives," for Landmarks Commission, City of Boston.

"Marketing Your Downtown for Development Opportunities," International Council of Shopping Centers Conference.

"Fundamentals of Public-Private Partnerships," American Water Works Association Annual Conference.

"Finding Funds for New Construction," American Public Works Association International Exposition.

"Twenty-One Tips for Successful Capital Projects," Public Management magazine, International City/County Management Association.

"Checking for Quality," "Advanced Customer Service Skills," "How to Interview and Hire the Best People," In-house training.

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*Candidate Introduction*

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**Thomas Hutka, PE**

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**EDUCATION**

Harvard University, Master of Public Administration — Finance, Planning  
Princeton University, Bachelor of Science — Civil Engineering  
Florida State University, Certified Public Manager program.

**EXPERIENCE**

Director of Public Works, Broward County	2009 — 2020
City Manager, City of Port Huron	2001 — 2006
Deputy County Manager, Osceola County	1997 — 2001
Associate County Administrator, Hennepin County	1994 — 1996
Bond Rating Specialist, Standard & Poor's	1987 — 1988

**BACKGROUND**

My career in community government has been primarily in Florida, providing city services in communities very similar to Lake Worth Beach. I know Florida's laws, diverse cultures, tourist-based economy, climate demands, and citizen expectations.

Most relevant to the position of Lake Worth Beach's City Manager, I was City Manager in Port Huron, a water-front city with 35,000 residents and a population of 70,000 in the daytime, with 400 employees and a \$300 million operating budget. When I started, the City had never set policy goals, established long term budgets, properly explained their operating budget to Council Members or citizens, nor properly adjusted taxes and fees to meet expenses.

I am extremely proud of my work in this community. Not only did I help heal the many deep rifts in our team, but helped Council start positive, productive discussions of the important issues facing the City while arriving at virtually all unanimous votes.

More important are the accomplishments of this great organization's efforts. I helped to lead significant, measurable improvements to the local economy even under difficult state-wide financial conditions. We implemented the "Downtown Port Huron Action Plan" to rebuild streetscapes, attract new residential reinvestment for the first time in 30 years, and reduce downtown commercial vacancy from 40% to 8%. An innovative economic development program resulted in reducing vacancies in our City-owned industrial park from 30% to 5%. As result, regional unemployment was measurably reduced in several job categories. We also completed — with minimal neighborhood disruption — reconstruction of city's entire water, sewer, stormwater and street infrastructure.



**Thomas Hutka, PE**

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Across my diverse career in local government, and particularly as City Manager, I have overseen all services typically provided by community governments including yours. I have directly supervised — and achieved successes in — all the departments typically found in full-service local government:

Police	Economic Development
Fire	Downtown Development
Emergency Medical	Parks & Recreation
Disaster Response	Facilities Management
Social Services	Real Estate
Housing	Fleet
Planning	Parking
Zoning	Finance
Code Enforcement	Purchasing
Rental Inspection	Accounting
Building Inspection	Treasury
Engineering	Assessor
Capital Projects	Information Technology
Highway, Street and Bridge	Public Information
Environmental Protection	Clerk
Water/Wastewater	Attorney
Solid Waste	Human Resources

**GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE**

As you can see from my resume, my entire career has been dedicated to public service. I spent the first part of my career learning professional skills with the goal of bringing advanced, in-depth technical knowledge into government. The rest of my career has been devoted to protect communities and serve the public.

I was excited to see that you are looking for a new City Manager. I consider the position one of the best opportunities in my profession, since I know from my visits that Lake Worth Beach is one of the very best places in the country to live and work. At this point in my career, I am interested in putting my management skills to work directly for a professional, reputable and forward-thinking organization. I would very much like to apply my nationally-recognized experience to cultivate community partnerships and lead City staff to lasting results for your great community.

Simply put, my management philosophy is based on the “Golden Rule.” Having worked my way up through the ranks, I’ve worked for many different leaders, and developed a strong sense of how I like to be treated, challenged and appreciated on the job. Our on-the-job practice of

“participatory leadership” promotes working concepts of teamwork, as well as a sense of professional accountability on a personal level.

Regarding strengths and weaknesses, in my last two government leadership positions, I rebuilt the reputation, the professional expectations, and the performance of our teams at all levels by hiring, retaining, training and supporting some of the best people I’ve ever met. The lasting legacy of these excellent and diverse teams will bring experience, integrity and quality services to the public for many years into the future. While every effort was made to find the right assignment for every staff member, exercise progressive discipline to ensure fairness, and train and retrain all staff members as necessary, it is sometimes a difficult — but necessary — task to remove a person from his or her job.

I measure performance — and more importantly ensure success — by:

- 1.) Working closely with the Mayor and Commissioners to develop and detail Commission policies and strategic priority plans,
- 2.) Developing and assigning staff targets, goals and specific action items in line with each individual employee performance appraisal,
- 3.) Implementing cost, quality and schedule tracking controls,
- 4.) Conducting regular staff meetings to discover and resolve any difficulties through the strength of the team’s diverse knowledge and collective skills,
- 5.) Locking in, reporting and rewarding accomplished goals, and of course
- 6.) Regularly reporting program and project progress to the City Commission.

Starting with my analyzing local government multi-year budgets and long-range finance plans on Wall Street, and continuing with my teaching financial planning classes at national conferences, I have developed an advanced set of skills that I’ve applied on the job to raise bond ratings, improve service, and lower taxes and fees. In every one of my professional positions, I have led the design and implementation of cost/benefit analysis and cost/schedule controls for every multi-year project and program. Within a short time, managers were properly trained to enforce cost, schedule and quality controls for every project and program, large and small, for the current budget year and into the future.

But computer-based systems do not give the entire picture. As a manager — and especially during my first six months on the job — I have always spent most of my day, every day, visiting crews and service providers at the front lines of our work for the public. To fulfill my leadership philosophies, I have always spent many hours asking staff how I can help them do a better job.

### **Thomas Hutka, PE**

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In several executive positions, I implemented organizations' first customer service training, first use of social media to communicate with citizens, first quality improvement workshops, first project management classes, in addition to many other leadership initiatives. My early training as a construction project manager taught me well the principles of professional accountability and management by exception — in short, how to get team and personal results — even while creating an enjoyable and professional work environment. In short, I have almost forty years of significant tangible results in government.

Look for experience in your next City Manager, but also look for a record of success. Under my leadership, the Strategic Plan gets done.

All of the successes summarized on my resume (and many, many others) have been achieved by cultivating close partnerships between all stakeholders. I have built close professional and personal relationships based on a shared desire to serve the public with:

- Citizens and civic groups,
- News media,
- Local and national businesses,
- State governments,
- County governments,
- Regional governments,
- Environmental organizations,
- Hospitals,
- School districts,
- Colleges and Universities, and
- Not-for-profit community service organizations.

I have devoted my career — my life — to the idea that city government can do much, much more for our citizens than simply providing basic services, and have fulfilled that endeavor many times for several communities. I look forward to joining the Lake Worth Beach team to help maintain the best of your great community and help make improvements where needed.

**Thomas Hutka, PE**

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In every management position I've held, I've built a high-performance organization. For example, the Port Huron Times Herald printed the editorial "Hutka Helped Port Huron to Become Better":

"Hutka is a leader. There is no question Hutka made a difference. He reached out to a variety of community leaders and set a standard of cooperation. The City's progress was substantial enough to win state and national recognition. On Hutka's watch . . . he did much to help the city achieve. That type of leadership is hard to find . . . outstanding city manager."

No one could contact the City with negative contacts about me. Nor are there any negative media stories in existence. I've worked very hard to build bridges with the news media and, in fact, every stakeholder regardless of their opinion or point of view.

When not working, I bike, swim and in general enjoy the great outdoors.

**SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF**

- Experienced
- Results oriented
- Respectful
- Customer service oriented
- Environmentally conscious
- Ethical

**REASON FOR DEPARTING RECENT POSITION**

Having created and trained the best department serving the community *anywhere*, I am looking to take on new challenges in public service. With ten years remaining in my career, I am looking to bring my skills in local government to the City of Lake Worth Beach.

**MOST RECENT SALARY**

My final compensation at Broward County was \$205,000 plus excellent benefits.

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*CB&A Background Checks*

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**Background Check Summary for  
THOMAS "TOM" J. HUTKA**

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**Criminal Records Checks:**

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Hillsborough County, FL	No Records Found
St. Clair County, MI	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found
Michigan	No Records Found

**Civil Records Checks:**

County	
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Hillsborough County, FL	No Records Found
St. Clair County, MI	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found
Michigan	<b>August 2002</b> , Civil Lawsuit Filed Against the City of Port Huron including Mr. Hutka in his role as City Manager. <b>Disposition: February 2003</b> , Terminated
	<b>March 2003</b> , Civil Lawsuit Filed Against the City of Port Huron including Mr. Hutka in his role as City Manager. <b>Disposition: January 2004</b> , Terminated
	<i>* See next page for Candidate Explanation for Records Found</i>

**Motor Vehicle**

Florida	No Records Found
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**Credit**

Excellent

**Personal Bankruptcy**

No Records Found

**Sex Offender Registry**

Not Listed

**Background Check Summary for  
THOMAS "TOM" J. HUTKA**

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<b>Education</b>	Confirmed
<b>Employment</b>	Confirmed
<b>Social Media</b>	Nothing of Concern Found

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

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**From:** Thomas Hutka <tjhutka@yahoo.com>  
**To:** Lynelle Klein <lynelle@cb-asso.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Background Check Records Found that Require an Explanation

Hello Lynelle,

The report is self explanatory: it was a nuisance suit for \$10,000 brought against the City, all City Commissioners (then and former), City staff members, City consultants, local judges, former City Manager, recent interim City Manager, and me as the then City Manager. It was quickly thrown out of court as without merit.

Thanks,  
Tom



**Background Check Summary for  
THOMAS "TOM" J. HUTKA  
Personal Disclosure**

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**Personal Disclosure Questionnaire**

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Name of Applicant: Thomas J. Hutka

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

*Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.*

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?  
Yes  No
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?  
Yes  No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?  
Yes  No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?  
Yes  No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?  
Yes  No
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated?  
Yes  No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?  
Yes  No
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one. LinkedIn, Twitter (Note that the "Thomas Hutka" in Texas with political content on his social media accounts is not me.)
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?  
Yes  No
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.  
I was listed as both plaintiff (without my knowledge or consent) *and* defendant on a 1994 lawsuit against the City of Cleveland's civil service system. The suit was quickly dismissed by the Judge as without merit.

Attested to:

  
Signature of Applicant

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*CB&A Reference Notes*

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**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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**Marty Kiar – Property Appraiser, Broward County, FL 954-205-7735**

Mr. Kiar worked with Mr. Hutka during Mr. Kiar’s tenure as both Mayor and Commissioner for Broward County. They worked together starting in 2012 until 2016 Mr. Kiar became the County Property Appraiser. Mr. Hutka was impressive.

Though the County covers a small geographic area, it is highly populated. With approximately two million people in the area, traffic flow weighs heavily for the Public Works Director. As Director, Mr. Hutka handled the County and its needs responsibly. He rose to the position. He worked with others to decongest traffic and move people as smoothly as possible from one end of the County to the other.

Mr. Hutka was a hardworking, excellent employee. He worked on several capital projects, including a massive courthouse, proposals on a convention center, and traffic light synchronization. He overcame several obstacles, including light coordination and water management. He understood utility operations intimately and passed on that information to others. For example, Mr. Hutka took Mr. Kiar on a tour of all the facilities when Mr. Kiar became Commissioner in 2012.

Mr. Hutka was a respectable leader and usually made good decisions to maintain the organization at high performance levels. He hired highly qualified staff and trusted them to do their jobs. When issues arose, he accepted responsibility of any blame. His staff greatly respected him and worked hard. When Mr. Kiar was Mayor, he rarely received concerns from constituents about utilities and payments, both of which Mr. Hutka oversaw. Additionally, Mr. Hutka thoroughly understood business aspects behind operations. During budget reviews, he effectively explained the Public Works Department’s needs and proved the Department properly used the funds to benefit the County.

As an innovative change agent, Mr. Hutka kept others well informed. At a minimum, he held weekly meetings with Mr. Kiar. If Mr. Kiar ever had a problem or wanted Mr. Hutka’s viewpoint, Mr. Hutka explained issues clearly and in a way Mr. Kiar easily understood.

Mr. Hutka was close to both the public and local government agencies. The County contains 31 individual cities with their own Mayors, a large school board, and various other local government agencies. Mr. Hutka acted as a gentleman with all these groups and was easy to work with. He was customer service oriented, often fulfilling the public’s needs. He consistently completed projects in a timely fashion.

Mr. Kiar is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka’s background that will concern a future employer. Mr. Kiar would absolutely hire Mr. Hutka if given the opportunity and has the highest regard for him. Mr. Hutka is an exceptionally good worker and typically overcomes adversity. He is a great leader for both public and private groups. He will be a good Manager.

**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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**Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Personable,
- Hardworking,
- Innovative,
- Excellent employee,
- Gentleman, and
- Leader.

**Strengths:** Interpersonal skills, management abilities, communication skills.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Ron Thomas – Finance Director of Water and Wastewater, Broward County, FL  
956-931-0585**

Mr. Thomas began working with Mr. Hutka in 2015. At the beginning of 2020 Mr. Hutka put in a two-month resignation notice. Mr. Thomas was disappointed to hear of Mr. Hutka's resignation. Mr. Hutka was a respectable worker who had several good ideas. He academically understood utility operations and knew how to apply that knowledge.

Mr. Hutka performed excellently. He generally made good decisions and hired acceptable directors. He kept staff and directors informed via regular meetings and emails. He also invested in his personnel. He held in-person staff meetings to learn what issues employees had and to answer their questions. He welcomed complete honesty from his employees, and he maintained a straightforward attitude with them. If an employee struggled, Mr. Hutka stepped in to help. He was customer service oriented and even held customer service seminars to ensure employees knew how to help their customers.

Mr. Hutka changed certain cultures within the organization to ensure greater accountability. For example, he changed the budget transfer process between departments. Previously, if a department wanted more budget, that department filled out a paper and acquired a signature to attain the desired amount from a different department. Such budget transfers often occurred unbeknownst to the other department. Mr. Hutka overturned this quick process. The department desiring a budget transfer needed to contact Mr. Hutka and the other department's director. Mr. Hutka required proper justification with complete details in order to enact the transfer. Although Mr. Hutka's process implementations were not unique to other counties, such a change was radical for Broward County. He brought in necessary change and fixed the courthouse project that previously had been woefully behind schedule.

Sometimes a person advocated for a certain position and tried to have Mr. Hutka sign off without providing explicit details. However, Mr. Hutka required everyone to provide ample justification, which caused some irritation and discomfort for those unable to provide decent explanations.

**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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Furthermore, Mr. Hutka encouraged his staff to provide straightforward information. Mr. Thomas had worked on a graph regarding the County's solid waste in 2019. Typically, his graphs involved only two axes. However, Mr. Hutka asked for three axes involving the amount of construction tonnage, the price per ton, and future costs if the County had to suddenly expand the landfill. Mr. Thomas initially felt overwhelmed while making the graph. Once he completed the graph, though, he noticed how easily he interpreted the information. He then understood Mr. Hutka's intentions. Mr. Hutka wanted others to grasp the information right away after reading the graph.

Mr. Hutka understood utility operations, both from technical and business standpoints. He used his experience and knowledge to help others know the County's circumstances when people had complaints. He worked well with other state and local government agencies to effectively solve problems. For example, Mr. Hutka worked under a legislative mandate that did not allow the County to discharge inflow water within the County. As such, Mr. Hutka worked with a neighboring County that needed more effluent water to irrigate golf courses and both counties benefited. This agreement saved Broward County almost \$500 million by negating the need for drilling deep injection wells for the copious amounts of inflow water.

Mr. Thomas is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's personal or professional background that will concern a future employer. Mr. Thomas enjoyed working for Mr. Hutka and would absolutely hire him if given the opportunity. Mr. Hutka will be a good Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Knowledgeable,
- Open-minded,
- Customer service oriented,
- Straightforward,
- Approachable, and
- Change agent.

**Strengths:** Problem solving abilities, communication skills, management skills.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Chip LaMarca –Representative, State House, FL 954-444-3200**

Mr. LaMarca worked with Mr. Hutka between November 2010 and November 2018 when Mr. LaMarca was a commissioner for Broward County. As Broward County Director of Public Works, Mr. Hutka reported to the County Commissioner Board. He provided updates on various projects and was upfront on issues that arose. Even when difficult and sometimes emotional problems arose, he provided steady information.

**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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Despite the slowness of government processes, Mr. Hutka strove to accomplish tasks. He effectively solved problems and completed assignments in a timely fashion. He was strategic and planned thoroughly. He followed through excellently. Even with limited mobility in his position due to commissioner dictations, he performed well.

Mr. Hutka oversaw numerous large capital projects in the Public Works Department. Some of these multimillion-dollar developments involved wastewater reconstruction and animal care. He even worked on a \$2.1 billion airport project where he oversaw the building inspection and processes. During this massive project, he coordinated the private and public working environment to ensure the large public sector worked effectively with contractors.

In general, Mr. Hutka made good decisions. For example, he dealt with a water reuse issue. Essentially, some communities needed to get rid of excess water, and other communities needed extra water for other community projects. His department worked with local municipalities in order to provide the appropriate resources and revenue to both sides of the issue.

Additionally, Mr. Hutka maintained the organization at high performance levels. He strongly understood both processes and business side of operations. When constituents dealt with utility issues, he worked effectively. He regularly set a day aside to meet with Mr. LaMarca to discuss project details and which assignments needed additional funding. Mr. Hutka gave direct and detailed communication. When deeper questions arose, he provided ample information.

Mr. LaMarca is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's personal or professional background that will concern a future employer. Mr. LaMarca would strongly consider hiring Mr. Hutka for a director position. He is highly educated and experienced. He possesses both good managerial skills and the ability to apply his knowledge to real world situations. He capably handles problems and tasks. He can apply his experiences to be a good Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Intelligent,
- Strategic,
- Adaptive,
- Good planner,
- Capable, and
- Effective problem solver.

**Strengths:** Excellent follow-through, managerial skills.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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**Lamar Fisher – Board Commissioner, Broward County, FL 954-931-0585**

Mr. Fisher worked with Mr. Hutka between 2018 and 2020. At the time, Mr. Fisher was a Broward County Commissioner until he retired in 2020.

Mr. Hutka was well-versed and professionally handled his position. He completed tasks in a timely manner. He was dedicated and loyal. Though he performed admirably, he sometimes placed too much responsibility on himself.

During the year-and-a-half they worked together, Mr. Hutka greatly impressed Mr. Fisher. They met weekly to discuss project details and issues, typically via telephone. Whenever Mr. Fisher had a question or needed a solution, Mr. Hutka quickly responded. On multiple occasions, he corrected problems within 24 hours. He was accessible and quite informative. If asked a question, he usually had an answer ready. He also had good foresight, such as whenever he alerted Mr. Fisher of any potential problems his constituents might face.

Mr. Hutka greatly understood the finite details behind utility operations. He managed hundreds of people, leading with a wealth of experience and maturity. He also understood the business side of operations. He maintained the organization at a high performance level. Mr. Fisher received no complaints regarding Mr. Hutka.

As Director, Mr. Hutka oversaw multiple capital projects. Several included road mechanisms, such as light synchronization and construction. He worked daily with state and federal government agencies, as well as local government organizations to effectively solve problems.

Mr. Fisher is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's background that will concern a future employer. Mr. Fisher would hire Mr. Hutka if given the chance. Whoever hires Mr. Hutka will be pleased with his services. He will make a good Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Detail-oriented,
- Knowledgeable,
- Responsive,
- Dedicated,
- Loyal, and
- Informative.

**Strengths:** Accessibility, experience, organizational skills.

**Weaknesses:** Sometimes puts too much on himself without asking for additional help.

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**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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**Ilene Lieberman Michelson – Attorney, The Law Office of Stuart R. Michelson, FL  
954-463-6100**

Ms. Michelson has known Mr. Hutka since 2010. They worked together when she was a Broward County Commissioner and Mayor. Presently, she is now an attorney and no longer works directly with Mr. Hutka.

Mr. Hutka was a pleasure to work with. He completed tasks in a timely fashion. He was quite reliable and dependable. On multiple occasions, Ms. Michelson received calls from constituents on the weekends. If she had questions, she then contacted Mr. Hutka, who usually responded within an hour. Even if he did not have an answer, he quickly responded that he was looking into the issue. Regardless of the time or day of the week, he replied promptly.

Additionally, Mr. Hutka was a great manager. He remained calm when working with others. He generally made good decisions. He knew how to interview potential personnel, and he motivated his staff. He was a leader who excellently dealt with the big picture and left day-to-day operations to subordinates.

A good administrator, Mr. Hutka understood the Public Works Department well. He needed little direction in his position and intimately knew utility operations. Because Broward County is one of the most populous counties in the country, the Department handled an enormous workload. Mr. Hutka supervised numerous capital projects, such as a courthouse renovation and road construction. He also oversaw work at the airport.

Though a different department handled billing, Mr. Hutka comprehended the business side of utility operations. He knew the requirements to build a road or enact a plan. He had respectable project management skills. He collaborated effectively with some state agencies, such as when the county experienced state road issues.

Mr. Hutka worked well with the public. If anyone approached him with a problem, he listened. He researched available information before providing a variety of options. He understood public works well enough to know some issues had several different answers. If he was unsure of an immediate solution, he contacted the affected people to alert them as to how the problem might be corrected and what was currently being enacted.

Ms. Michelson is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's conduct or background that will concern a future employer. He is a highly qualified individual and a good Director. If given the opportunity, she would hire Mr. Hutka. Because of his great management style and ability to accomplish tasks effectively, he will make a good Manager.

**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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**Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Responsive,
- Calm,
- Reliable,
- Dependable,
- Leader, and
- Customer service oriented.

**Strengths:** Managerial skills, project management abilities, communication skills.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Mark Darmanin – Operations Director of Water and Wastewater, Broward County, FL  
954-914-4575**

Mr. Darmanin worked for Mr. Hutka for approximately 6 years since December 2013. Mr. Hutka has performed excellently. He communicates regularly via email and telephone. If issues arise between divisions, he discusses matters with divisional leaders. He keeps others informed.

Mr. Hutka typically makes good decisions. He thoroughly investigates concerns by researching the problem and observing both sides to the issue. He makes suitable selection judgments regarding staff. He places the right people in the right place and trusts their decisions. He supports his staff when needed and prepares employees so they can accomplish their jobs. He is quite thorough and follows up well.

Additionally, Mr. Hutka understands the procedural points behind utility operations well enough to discuss what action must be taken with plant operations. While he is generally more comfortable guiding the Department to the big picture for a project, Mr. Hutka pays significant attention to details. He knows the big picture is only accomplished by watching the little details. He also understands the business behind utility operations, having overseen much of that in Broward County.

Some of the large capital projects Mr. Hutka has managed include multimillion-dollar developments. He has supervised the construction of a new courthouse. He has overseen the full renovation of the wastewater plant, costing around \$40 million. He has also managed significant highway construction and wastewater improvements.

Mr. Hutka comfortably works as a change agent in order to maintain the organization at a high performance level. He oversees his staff, providing guidance and support. Once he trusts his staff to follow through properly, he focuses on maintaining good performance. For example, Mr.

**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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Hutka established procedures for all divisions to follow. Such procedures provided consistent means of communication and set common expectations for all divisions.

Furthermore, Mr. Hutka is customer service oriented. He has good public relations. When he works with the media, he typically understands the media's intentions, whether those intentions are to just ask a question or to make a point. During quarterly meetings, he often pairs up the divisions that typically interact with each other. This way, he has helped improve divisional relationships and facilitate better communication.

Mr. Hutka effectively solves problems through a holistic approach. He researches the problem and possible solutions before analyzing each solution's outcome. Using this approach, he makes informed decisions.

Mr. Darmanin is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's conduct or background that will concern a future employer. Mr. Darmanin would hire Mr. Hutka if given the opportunity. Mr. Hutka accomplishes tasks promptly, often ahead of schedule. He is organized and meticulous. He supports his staff. He will make a good Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Organized,
- Meticulous,
- Thorough,
- Fair,
- Literate, and
- Customer service oriented.

**Strengths:** Attention to detail, management abilities, communication skills.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Roberto Hernandez – Deputy City Manager, City of Fort Lauderdale, FL 954-828-5003**

Mr. Hernandez knew of Mr. Hutka between 2006 and 2008. Later, Mr. Hernandez worked with Mr. Hutka between 2013 and 2016 when Mr. Hernandez was the Broward County Deputy Administrator who supervised Mr. Hutka. Mr. Hernandez left the position to become the Fort Lauderdale Deputy City Manager.

Mr. Hutka was an effective leader. He respectfully responded to the County Manager's needs. He planned appropriately and strategically. He remained organized and analytical. He was a polished professional who possessed articulate public speaking skills. He was disciplined, focused, and timely.

**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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Mr. Hernandez saw few crises during Mr. Hutka's leadership. Mr. Hutka capably handled his position. He focused on the big picture and comfortably left everyday operations to subordinates. He used his previous experiences as a city manager and deputy city administrator to confidently stick with the department's goals. While some said Mr. Hutka was tough on his employees, Mr. Hernandez did not notice such behavior.

Mr. Hutka supervised numerous capital projects due to the County's large population. He oversaw major expansion plans for the wastewater treatment plant. He also undertook seaport planning and construction until that project was reworked to a different department.

Additionally, Mr. Hutka generally made good decisions. He brought in many acceptable personnel. He also maintained exacting and demanding standards to keep the organization at high performance levels. When issues arose, he analyzed the situation to determine the strengths and weaknesses of each area. He methodically looked at problems before making a decision.

Mr. Hutka understood the business side of utility operations. He also understood utility operation technicalities. He was quite intelligent and academic. However, because of his strong intellectuality and the immense size of the Public Works Department, Mr. Hutka may not have related well with blue-collar workers.

With his superiors, Mr. Hutka communicated effectively. He met on a regular basis as issues unfolded and brought issues to Mr. Hernandez's attention when necessary. Mr. Hutka communicated credibly and with legitimacy when speaking with elected officials. He worked well with the public. He also dealt efficiently with state and local government agencies.

Mr. Hernandez is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's conduct or background that will concern a future employer. If Mr. Hernandez had a position available, he would hire Mr. Hutka. Mr. Hutka capably handles long-term planning and strategies. He will make a good Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Intelligent,
- Disciplined,
- Responsive,
- Polished,
- Professional,
- Focused, and
- Capable.

**Strengths:** Organizational skills, analytical abilities, public speaking.

**Weaknesses:** May not have related well with blue-collar workers.

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**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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**Rita Durocher – Assistant to Department Director, Broward County, FL 954-357-6410**

Ms. Durocher has worked with Mr. Hutka since approximately 2009. He is a reasonable supervisor who is willing to do whatever is necessary to help employees do their jobs. Even though Mr. Hutka has been short staffed due to financial circumstances, he has performed well. He is often a comedian, telling good jokes to keep up office morale. He is a patient and fair boss.

Mr. Hutka is a knowledgeable teacher. He considers employees' input to facilitate an easier workflow. In fact, he eagerly desires employee feedback. He also points out areas that require improvement. For example, he advocated for classes specifically designed to help employees complete their jobs well. He implemented both a customer service training program and a quality assurance program for staff members.

Mr. Hutka is a well-rounded individual. He comprehends both the technical and business aspects behind utility operations. He has vast experience with wastewater treatment operations and construction. He also has ample involvement with public work streets and construction. He confidently discusses finite details with plant operators and observes the big picture. He comfortably leaves day-to-day operations to subordinates, allowing them to see how their jobs fit in the master plan.

Furthermore, Mr. Hutka has overseen numerous capital projects. A major development involved renovating street intersections and working with traffic signals. He also worked on new wastewater plants and a new convention center. The largest project he recently completed was the 20-story downtown courthouse in the City of Fort Lauderdale.

Generally, Mr. Hutka makes good decisions. He meets and exceeds deadlines. He is an excellent judge of character and has made sound decisions when hiring personnel. He judges an employee's potential well and has been a sound ear for division directors when they have hired staff. He effectively solves problems. When issues arise, he talks directly to involved divisions and listens to different sides. He often asks for input from deputy directors and is unafraid to elevate the issue to a commissioner when necessary.

Mr. Hutka communicates effectively with everyone, from property owners to county commissioners to state representatives. He works well with the public. He also handles intergovernmental and media relations well. He has commendably worked with non-profit organizations, Florida State departments, and the 31 municipalities within the county. When handling his staff, Mr. Hutka is an excellent communicator. He has great command of the English language. He has even instituted classes for employees to deal with internal and external customers to improve their communication skills.

Mr. Hutka is an innovative change agent who capably maintains the organization at a high performance level. When Mr. Hutka first started with Broward County, the Public Works Department had several personnel issues. One issue was the office culture, where some people only worked when needed or only worked within the division. However, Mr. Hutka has changed

**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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that culture. Now, employees willingly complete their assignments and enjoy what they do. They enjoy helping one another, even across different divisions.

Ms. Durocher is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's background that will concern a future employer. If given the opportunity, she would absolutely hire him. Mr. Hutka will make a good Manager. He works hard and expects his staff to do the same. He works with his team to figure out solutions and ensures his staff members have the resources they need.

**Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Knowledgeable,
- Fair,
- Teacher,
- Facilitator,
- Coordinated, and
- Well spoken.

**Strengths:** Fairness, sense of humor.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Brittany Wallman – Reporter, Sun Sentinel Newspaper, FL 954-356-4541**

Ms. Wallman knew Mr. Hutka approximately between 2010 and 2017 when she wrote for the South Florida Sun Sentinel, the main Broward County newspaper. They no longer remain in contact.

Ms. Wallman respected her interactions with Mr. Hutka. He behaved professionally and was easily accessible. If Ms. Wallman had questions on county issues, Mr. Hutka answered her questions directly. Rather than sending her through a communications person, he either personally provided details or sent her to the correct person if he was unsure. If that individual was unavailable, he sent her a brief email covering a few important points.

Whether Mr. Hutka worked on traffic light synchronization or the courthouse project, all communications were thorough and transparent. Whenever Ms. Wallman had concerns on county issues, he provided her the same material he gave commissioners.

Mr. Hutka was smart, friendly, and a nice person in general. He rarely experienced friction with others. He treated Ms. Wallman respectfully, even during the times she was highly critical.

Ms. Wallman had only positive exchanges with him, which was a rarity among other individuals in her media career over the past 25 years. For example, Ms. Wallman asked him about the

**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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county's response to the Zika virus because one of her colleagues handled health issues. Mr. Hutka sent an email back to Ms. Wallman telling her to have the colleague contact him directly. He also included a PowerPoint discussing the virus and the email address of the staff member who knew the issue better.

Mr. Hutka effectively solved problems. Though government processes were sometimes slow or controversial, he performed well. He handled the media and media inquiries professionally and transparently.

Ms. Wallman is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's personal or professional background that will concern a future employer. She would hire him if given the opportunity. Mr. Hutka is a high-caliber leader. He will make a good Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Respectful,
- Friendly,
- Responsive,
- Professional,
- Thorough, and
- Even-tempered.

**Strengths:** Media handling, management abilities, communication skills.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Prepared by:** Danielle Dayton  
Colin Baenziger & Associates



## **Section 8**

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*CB&A Internet Research*

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**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.local10.com/consumer/2018/07/17/mysterious-nighttime-humming-leaves-hollywood-neighbors-restless/>

July 17, 2018

**Mysterious Nighttime Humming Leaves Hollywood Neighbors Restless**

Author: Layron Livingston

Nosey neighbors aren't Bea Mazzrillo's problem. It's the noisy one across the street. "Absolutely wretched," is how Mazzrillo described the racket. "It's very loud, and it never goes away." Mazzrillo reached out to the Leave it to Layron team for help silencing the not-so-soothing sound. Imagine a very mechanical hum, constantly humming, at the same pitch, 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Mazzrillo said the droning is worse at night and early in the morning. One morning, she recorded the sound on her cellphone from inside her apartment, sealed with hurricane impact windows.

In the video, she notes the time -- just before 5 a.m. --and you can hear the hum, humming away. Seconds later, the video shows Mazzrillo opening her front door, allowing the listener to get the full effect. "Somebody should be able to do something," she said. Mazzrillo and her husband moved into their Harrison Street condo eight years ago. It's right across the street from Broward County's South Regional Courthouse in Hollywood. Mazzrillo and her neighbors tell the LITL team the noise became increasingly unbearable within the past year. They've contacted the city's code enforcement department, and have even made contact with workers in the courthouse building to get the humming to stop.

The LITL team's search for silence stopped with **Tom Hutka**, public works director with Broward County. After we called, **Hutka** stopped by the South Regional Courthouse. "I heard the noise, and I have to agree, we can do better and make everybody in the neighborhood happier," he said. **Hutka** said the constant noise is caused by chillers, part of the cooling system for the courthouse. While many county buildings' cooling equipment is located on the roof, the chillers at the South Regional Courthouse are located inside utility rooms, at the back of the building. He said the building's air conditioning system can function properly without the chillers running during the evening and overnight hours. The plan, now, is to shut the chillers down at the end of the day to make things quiet when no one's using the building.

Mazzrillo immediately noticed the change, Sunday night. She recorded another video on her cellphone, this time from outside of her condo. In the video, the noise was gone and she thanks the LITL team. She also thanked **Hutka**. "Heavenly," is how she described the silence. **Hutka** also said there are plans in the works to minimize the noise during the day. The design and permitting process will take some time, but a fence with hedges is slated to be installed behind the courthouse to help buffer the noise from the utility room. **Hutka** said the county is also now looking into ways to buffer the sound inside the utility rooms. "We will be good neighbors, and we'll take care of business for them," **Hutka** said.

Fort Lauderdale Magazine (FL)

June 1, 2018

**Wasted Broward****Insufficient Facilities, Lack of Oversight, Changing Economics – There are Plenty of Reasons Why – But When it Comes to Recycling in Broward, Mount Trashmore Isn't the Only Thing That Stinks**

Robin Merrill is the type of person who chases a napkin caught in the wind. If she finds a plastic water bottle, she'll lug it around in her purse or car until she spots a recycling bin. At her condo, where she lives with her husband and two sons, she led the charge to start the building's recycling program more than a decade ago, and remains draconian in keeping her cardboard, plastic and cans separate from the trash. For a time, she even collected plastic spoons from sticky-fingered European tourists who strolled past her art gallery from a nearby ice cream shop and made sure they wound up in the proper bin.

- For Robin, recycling isn't just an ethical or moral issue—it's a spiritual one. It's the cornerstone of her relationship with the earth, a recurring motif in her work as an artist and gallerist in Fort Lauderdale. "I'm tired of being the shrill voice or the loud mom but this is deeply personal to me," Merrill says. "It's completely selfish to throw something away that shouldn't be."
- 
- For the most part, it's hard to rile people up about garbage. It smells. It's easy to pretend no one saw you free-throw your soup can into the trash, or wing it when you question if a plastic shopping bag can be recycled (it can't!). And yet every day it seems that Mount Trashmore looms higher and higher over the Turnpike and the prospect of meeting the state's goal of a 75 percent recycling rate by 2020 becomes more and more unlikely—especially now that reports from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection reveal that Broward's recycling rate has taken a nosedive: plummeting from its high of 60 percent in 2012 to 48 percent in 2016, the lowest recorded number in almost a decade and 24 percent lower than the 72 percent rate in Palm Beach County (the numbers for 2017 aren't out yet).
- 
- Why is Broward so bad at recycling? It's a tangle of bureaucratic and economic issues: dips in the market's demand for recyclables, a shuttered waste-to-energy plant in Pompano, a disbanded regional recycling board five years ago, a confusing tangle of public utility and private enterprise and a lack of accountability and oversight over the county's municipalities. Unfortunately, that means that when someone like Robin Merrill tosses a glass bottle in the blue recycling bin, it's hard to pinpoint where exactly it'll end up: a local sorting facility, an out-of-state processing center, or perhaps even in a landfill. "It's demoralizing to even think that the little we're already recycling isn't actually being recycled," Merrill says. "We're losing what little we even had."
- 
- After months of research, this month the county and local municipalities plan to release a major report on the state of recycling in Broward. The report, compiled by consulting firm

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Arcadis, will focus on how the county can collectively reach the state’s 75 percent recycling goal by 2020. Leaders are hopeful it will usher with it a new era of sustainability in Broward. “We can’t wait any longer to figure this out,” Broward County Mayor Beam Furr says. “What are we going to do when the Monarch Hill Landfill [Mount Trashmore] reaches its life span? Where will everything go then?”

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- If you ask the director of Public Works for Broward County, a deeply patient man named **Thomas Hutka**, the only way to understand the reasons recycling rates plummeted is to start from the beginning. Or at least all the way back to 1986, when Ronald Reagan was president and a quasi-independent government agency was formed in Broward to tackle recycling, uniting unincorporated parts of the county and local municipalities. The Resource Recovery Board (RRB) oversaw contracts with private companies that routed recyclables to sorting and processing facilities and, depending on your address, shuttled the trash put in garbage bins to one of two waste-to-energy plants—one in the north and one in the south—that incinerated the waste and created power. It’s not recycling, but since it generates energy and keeps waste out of landfills, the state credits the percentage of waste that is incinerated towards the county’s total recycling goal, which was added to the annual FDEP reports in 2012.
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- Recycling rates steadily hovered around 25 percent in the early aughts. In 2008, the RRB switched from the system where households put paper and cardboard in one bin and glass and plastic in another to a process called single-stream recycling, in which all recyclables mingle together in one 90-gallon blue bin. The logic was that by making recycling easier, more people would. Indeed, the rates began to climb slowly. With the added waste-to-energy credits, by 2012, the county celebrated its highest mark yet: Sixty percent of all solid waste was recycled.
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- But things soon flipped. In 2013, Waste Management closed one of its recycling centers in southwest Broward. That July, the RRB, the group responsible for overseeing most recycling in the county, disbanded after its 27-year contract ended. The municipalities that once comprised the RRB had to now secure their own systems of recycling (typically now to a facility, where a company takes possession of it and it is then either shipped, sorted, processed and recycled).
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- The county mostly had contracts with Waste Management, but now another waste disposal company called Sun Bergeron, run by Broward businessman Ron Bergeron, created competition. Rather than send trash to the waste-to-energy plants owned by Wheelabrator to the south and Waste Management to the north, Sun Bergeron mostly shuttled its solid waste to landfills including some in the middle of the state, which drastically reduced the waste-to-energy credits Broward had previously received. Less tonnage was being incinerated. Waste Management shuttered its waste-to-energy plant in Pompano in 2015. “It’s now a patchwork quilt with a lot of different players,” **Thomas Hutka** says. “Some cities have contracts with Waste Management, others with Sun Bergeron, others kept the contracts secured by the county ... But less waste is going to the incinerators than it used to.”
- 
- Basically, without the RRB’s oversight, a local municipality like the City of Fort Lauderdale remains responsible for organizing curbside garbage and recycle pickup. Except now it’s nearly

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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impossible to pinpoint where that neighborhood garbage truck goes to dump its contents across 31 autonomous municipalities. Even if every single truck took its contents to the remaining waste-to-energy plant in south Broward, that plant's capacity still couldn't withstand it. There have even been talks about shuttling the waste further north to Palm Beach County and its new state-of-the-art waste-to-energy plant. "When they dismantled the waste-to-energy center in the north, it was a disaster for the county," Mayor Furr says. "As Palm Beach County's building a new \$600-million waste-to-energy plant in 2016, we're dismantling ours, and that's when our rates really started going down."

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- In 2014, Broward recycling had dropped to 55 percent and by 2016, it was listed at 48 percent. As Palm Beach County comes close to reaching the 75 percent state recycling goal and Broward's current downward trend continues, the county finds itself below the 50 percent mark for the first time since 2011, reversing years of hard work by residents and local leaders.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel (FL)  
September 15, 2016

**Crosswalk Plea from Widow Gains Backing**

Author: Brittany Wallman

It's just one six-lane roadway, just one crusade to help veterans cross the street to the clinic, and it has support from City Halls to the halls of Congress. It's a cause that gained the voice of a widow after a 70-year-old Army veteran, Willie Span, was struck and killed there two years ago. But the effort to get the Commercial Boulevard crosswalk is a study in government red tape, a "cluster to the 10th magnitude," according to one elected official, Cooper City's Lisa Mallozzi. Today the crosswalk quest will get new attention, when Span's widow, Doris, addresses the Broward County Commission. She's got the backing of the local congressional delegation, among others. Five U.S. representatives from South Florida - Lois Frankel, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Frederica Wilson, Alcee Hastings and Ted Deutch - signed a letter to the county after Span's death, asking that a pedestrian traffic signal and crosswalk be installed in the 9800 block of Commercial Boulevard. Veterans cross the busy roadway midblock to reach the William "Bill" Kling VA Clinic on the south side. That might not be enough. The county says there aren't enough pedestrians to warrant a signal and crosswalk.

Willie Span, 70, took the Broward County Transit route 55 bus on Oct. 2, 2014, after 6 a.m. He rode about a mile, got off and started for the clinic across the street. A 36-year-old woman driving an Acura hit him before he got halfway across Commercial. The sun hadn't come up, and she didn't see him, police said. Span had a volunteer post to report to at the veterans clinic in Miami under a program for veterans with mental or physical disabilities. He intended to catch a shuttle there from the Broward clinic. He enlisted in the Army in 1963 and served six years, stationed in Germany during the Vietnam era. Back in the States, he became addicted to drugs and homeless. Doris Span had a history of drugs, as well, but when they met in 2003, they were both clean and remained so, she said. They married in 2006, on her 51st birthday. And in 2014, three months before the accident, they bought a house. When the deputy came to her home that morning, she thought he was welcoming her to the neighborhood. "He shuffled his feet a little," she remembered. "He said, 'Is your husband Willie?' I said, stop, don't say anything, just don't say it." She'd seen reports about the accident on TV news and had called him, leaving a message: "I saw there was a fatal accident the way you go. Did you see it? Love you. Bye."

Span couldn't talk about the accident until recently. She struggled with a breakdown and was hospitalized twice. As she watched others advocate for a crosswalk, she wished she could speak up, too. But the pain and guilt were paralyzing, she said. Now she said she's speaking out and is planning a memorial, "for me, to have joy about how my husband lived." Wasserman Schultz, D-Weston, said she met Doris Span in August at a Broward Veterans Coalition meeting. "I want to do everything we can to provide our veterans the health care, safety and security they deserve - including creating this crosswalk, which will help South Florida's veterans access the clinic in a safe manner," she said Monday in a written statement. Deutch said in a written statement that it's inconceivable that "after risking their lives for our country ... veterans are then expected to risk



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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their lives crossing a busy road just to access the health care and mental health services that they deserve." He said he'll continue working to support installation of a signal near the clinic.

The county is officially opposed, a position reiterated this week by Public Works Director **Tom Hutka**. "A crosswalk cannot and should not be installed at this location because it would violate federal standards, state law and county law," he said in an email. According to federal guidelines, in order to justify a crosswalk or signal, 75 pedestrians must cross in a four-hour period, or 93 in the peak hour. But a January 2014 count found only five people crossing in a four-hour period and 14 at peak hour, according to the county. **Hutka** said the crossing is safer now, because the mid-block bus stop was eliminated after Span's death.

Span's memorial is planned for 3 p.m. Oct. 1 at Daybreak Assembly church in Tamarac.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel (FL)

May 8, 2016

**County Wary of Contractor**

Author: Brittany Wallman

The contractor who would build a Broward County Convention Center expansion and hotel has experience constructing the county's highest profile public works projects. Unfortunately, the experience hasn't all been good, county officials say. Broward County is fighting with Tutor Perini Corp. over delays in building a new courthouse in downtown Fort Lauderdale and construction of the traffic tunnels under the new, elevated runway at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport. Millions of dollars are at stake, as the county and contractor Perini argue over who is at fault for the delays. "They feel the county owes them money. We feel they owe us money," said Kent George, immediate past aviation director, who still works for the county to resolve this issue, among others. The potential for litigation concerns some county commissioners as they step into their next major project, the convention center.

Commissioners on April 26 accepted the lone development team left in the competitive process to build a convention hotel, Matthews Southwest Holdings Inc. But they said they want to discuss later this month whether to allow Tutor Perini to remain part of that team. An update on the convention center project is scheduled for Tuesday's county commission meeting. Danny Hoisman, executive vice president of Tutor Perini Building Corp.'s Florida division, said he thinks both disputes will be settled. "On either project, the courthouse or the runway, we're not adverse with the county," Hoisman said. "And we have change requests that we are confident we will resolve amicably." The deal is the county's fourth attempt to get a hotel built at the convention center, a top priority of the business community for years. "My eyes are wide open, and we have history," Broward Commissioner Lois Wexler said recently, "and I don't know that I really want to consider that history and say, 'Yeah, go ahead and keep them as part of your team.'" Wexler said she's also concerned that the company has been given so many of the latest major county projects. "I've always subscribed to this philosophy of spreading money around," Wexler said.

Commissioner Chip LaMarca said he isn't concerned about the quality of Tutor's work, but said the rocky relationship with the county has some subcontractors waiting to be paid. "People still are not getting paid. That's my big issue," LaMarca said. "I don't want to endeavor on a new project for half a billion dollars where we have that similar issue." The courthouse is nearly complete, but a year late. In a June memo to commissioners, Public Works Director **Tom Hutka** said underground work along Courthouse Drive and courtroom redesigns requested by judges and other courthouse users were the primary causes of the delays. But there remain disagreements about how much is still owed. Tutor says the county owes it \$11.3 million for the extra work, assistant public works Director Steve Hammond said. "We have every ambition of resolving that amicably, but we are very far apart at this point," Hammond told commissioners. "... We are going to make every effort to hear it out, deal with it fairly and quickly, and hopefully not have to resort to the ultimate end game of litigation. But that's always out there."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Negotiations on the \$226 million airport job, mostly building the above-ground tunnels on U.S. 1, is coming closer, George said. Tutor originally claimed the county owed it \$40 million for the delays brought about by changes in the project, George said, while the county claimed Tutor owed it \$34.6 million. For a major public works project to end in squabbling over money is not unusual, he said. Two other major runway contracts also ended that way. But, he said, they were settled. "This has been a very, very difficult process, more so than necessary," George said. "It does not need to be this difficult and last this long." Matthews Southwest said it expects its convention center expansion and hotel would be complete in 2020.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel (FL)

June 29, 2014

**Traffic Technology Improvement**

Author: Michael Turnbell and Brittany Wallman

Broward County has been promising for 40 years to fix the problem of unsynchronized traffic lights. Now officials say they have the solution -- a real-time system that can adapt to changing traffic conditions -- but it is still about six years away. The county's current analog system allows for only three traffic patterns, but a new, more reliable digital system will allow as many patterns as needed. For instance, signals will recover timing much faster after a train passes. The digital technology already is installed on all major roads south of Interstate 595 but issues remain on Griffin Road as well as along Miramar Parkway and Pines Boulevard near Interstate 75. Traffic engineers said those roadways are overburdened and the county has hired a consultant to see if improvements can be made. All major roads north of I-595 will be converted to digital by 2015.

The next step is a planned \$22.9 million conversion to fiber optics that will allow video detectors -- the camera-like devices mounted on signal poles throughout the county -- to feed traffic headquarters such information as number of vehicles and length of traffic lines, said Broward's deputy public works director, Tony Hui. That will allow engineers to improve signal timing based on real-time conditions. The county is taking advantage of state road projects wherever it can to install the fiber optics. But that work that will not be complete countywide until 2020. "People are going to notice a difference," Hui said, but "it's not going to be perfect all the time." Blame complexity for some of the problem. For example:

- \*The county's roads are not laid out in a uniform grid, and there are 400 to 500 left turns that complicate matters;
- \*Intersections have to allow time for people on bike or foot to cross;
- \*Trains, drawbridges and emergency vehicles thwart signal timing;

Some roads are just plain overloaded. "We have 150 gallons trying to get into a 100 gallon pipe," Broward Traffic Engineering Director Scott Brunner said. Don Crites, of Pompano Beach, said he would love to use Dixie Highway as an alternative to Interstate 95 at rush hour between Atlantic Boulevard and Glades Road. But the signals stymie him. "All the traffic lights operate counter to the flow of traffic no matter what time of day or day of the week," he said. "I have found that heading farther east to catch U.S. 1 will actually cut 10 minutes ... even though the traffic is much heavier on U.S. 1, all because the lights are timed to traffic on U.S. 1."

Dixie Highway is a trouble spot for signal timing because many roads that intersect it -- such as Sample Road and Copans Road -- have higher traffic volumes. That means green lights for Dixie traffic are shorter. Until now, smooth signal timing on Dixie and other roads hasn't been possible. The county's 25-year-old mainframe computer uses unreliable and "antiquated" technology that "doesn't work very well," said **Tom Hutka**, Broward's Public Works director. Signals currently are timed for three patterns -- morning, afternoon and all other times. Between midnight and 6 a.m., signals operate independently. Between 2009 and 2012, the county retimed

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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55 roads and 1,050 intersections. Officials say that cut travel times 10 percent to 43 percent, and reduced stops at red lights by 10 percent to 32 percent. To date, the effort cost the county \$3.3 million. Metro areas with worse congestion have managed to get their lights timed. Los Angeles synchronized every one of its 4,500 traffic signals in a 469-square-mile area. It cost \$400 million and took more than 30 years to complete this past spring. The system relies on magnetic sensors embedded in the road, cameras and a central computer that constantly adjusts signal timing. City officials say average travel speeds are 16 percent faster, and delays at major intersections are down 12 percent. State Sen. Jeremy Ring, D-Parkland, said synchronization should be the county's top transportation priority. "Everyone agrees there is a problem," Ring said. "My eyes tell me it's definitely not fine."

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McClatchy-Tribune Regional News (USA)

January 24, 2013

**Former Broward Official Faces Charges, believed to be in Middle East**

Author: Jon Burstein

Jan. 24--Broward County's former traffic engineering director is a wanted man. There's been an arrest warrant out for Jihad El Eid since August with federal prosecutors accusing him of pocketing more than \$150,000 in bribes from a company that had millions of dollars of contracts with the county. The criminal allegations were unsealed Wednesday with the FBI wrapping up its lengthy investigation into El Eid's relationship with Southeast Underground Utilities, a Davie-based traffic equipment company. El Eid, 53, is believed to have fled to the Middle East, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office. El Eid, who headed the county's traffic engineering division for 13 years, took cash payouts from Southeast as he helped the company overbill taxpayers by at least \$3 million, federal prosecutors allege. He also is accused of ensuring the company had no competition for contracts as well as providing it with inside information.

El Eid was demoted from his job in March 2010 and fired a few months later. He subsequently became the top traffic official for the city of Amarillo, Texas. He stopped showing up for work there in July 2011, a few weeks after it became public that his relationship with Southeast was under federal investigation. El Eid told Amarillo officials that he had to go to Lebanon to attend to his dying father and then needed to be hospitalized himself. When someone from the city went to El Eid's Amarillo apartment in late August 2011, it was empty with spoiled food in the refrigerator, dishes in the sink and the apartment keys on a counter, according to Amarillo city records. Federal prosecutors are accusing El Eid of bribery, mail fraud and extortion. A relative, Wael El Eid, 45, is also facing an aiding and abetting charge. According to court records, Jihad El Eid got Southeast to hire Wael El Eid. Wael El Eid also is thought to be in the Middle East, federal prosecutors said. Jihad El Eid's attorney, Fred Haddad, could not be reached for comment Wednesday. Before he was demoted, Jihad El Eid ran a department of about 140 employees. With an annual salary of \$137,918.30, he oversaw the maintenance, repair and construction of the county's traffic control systems, street lighting and signs.

The criminal allegations against El Eid were unsealed Tuesday after federal prosecutors charged Southeast owner Anthoneel Allen and the company's former vice president, James Hashim, with conspiracy to commit bribery, fraud and extortion. A conviction for criminal conspiracy can carry up to five years in prison. Allen, 40, and Hashim, 50, surrendered Wednesday at the Fort Lauderdale federal courthouse. Their attorneys and Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Kaplan agreed that their bonds would be set at \$100,000. Hashim, of Plantation, is scheduled to enter into a plea deal on Feb. 1, while Allen's attorney said in court that his client has been cooperating with federal authorities. Allen, of Sunrise, has been liquidating his assets to pay back the county, said his attorney Michael Gary Smith. Broward County awarded Southeast a series of multimillion dollar contracts from 2005 to 2010. The company did repair work on the county's traffic lights and street equipment, installed video detection cameras to monitor traffic flow and laid hundreds of thousands of feet of underground cable to synchronize traffic. Jihad El Eid

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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unilaterally assigned Southeast work to lay cables despite the company not having sufficient bonding capacity to bid on the job, according to federal prosecutors. He is accused of repeatedly boosting a contract's budget with it swelling from \$6.6 million to \$21.2 million. Jihad El Eid went before the Broward County Commission at least once to support such budget increases, court records show. Broward County is suing Southeast for more than \$3 million for overbillings, defective work and the cost to repair work.

El Eid's relationship with the company came into question in 2009 when a county employee began finding financial irregularities around the same time an anonymous letter arrived at County Hall, said Broward Public Works Director **Thomas Hutka**. The letter accused El Eid of giving preferential treatment to Southeast, repeating rumors that his family drove a sports car purchased by a company official. **Hutka** said that since the allegations against El Eid were made, the traffic engineering division has been reorganized and all contracts and expenditures now must be reviewed by multiple managers. County staff assisted the federal investigation, he said.

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**Thomas J. Hutka**

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Broward Bulldog (FL)

April 27, 2012

Section: County

**Bureaucrats' Last Minute Demand Alters Broward Trash Negotiations and Could Lead to Higher Rates**

Author: Buddy Nevins

The promise of the lowest price for waste disposal could be thwarted by a last-minute demand from top Broward County administrators. The county was in the throes of negotiating a multi-million dollar waste disposal contract when suddenly the government issued a requirement that any company must provide a list of disposal sites. "This is a big issue, a very big issue... Cities will have problems that they don't know where their garbage is going," **Thomas Hutka**, Broward's public works director, explained during contract negotiations this week.

Newcomer Sun/Bergeron immediately complained that the new mandate favored Wheelabrator Technologies, the Waste Management subsidiary which has held a near monopoly on Broward's waste disposal for over 20 years and already owns a landfill and a pair of waste-to-energy plants here. "When Wheelabrator won this contract 20 years ago, they didn't have a disposal site. We are newcomers," said Aleida "Ali" Waldman, Bergeron's general counsel. Sun/Bergeron Vice President Phil Medico contended residents and businesses could get a better deal by disposing of the waste in whatever facility has the best price rather than tie themselves to one site for five years. Under Sun/Bergeron's proposal, waste would be sent to various transfer stations around Broward and then sorted through for recyclable material. Anything that could not be recycled would be trucked to yet-unnamed disposal sites. Wheelabrator proposes to continue disposing waste in its two company-owned existing sites. The waste is minimally processed for recyclables and is either burned or buried – in a landfill along Florida's Turnpike in North Broward or in an incinerator just south of Interstate 595 in Davie. The burned trash at both locations is used to generate electricity.

The sites were built in the late-1980s under a contract with Broward County that will expire in 2013. Under its current agreement, Wheelabrator handles the disposal for 26 of Broward's 31 cities. Waste removal involves two separate jobs. A hauler has a franchise with each city to pick up waste at homes and businesses. That waste is then hauled to a disposal site that tacks on a fee. The hauling and disposal fees are generally rolled into one fee paid by residents and business owners. The current negotiations involve only disposal, but it is a contract worth tens of millions of dollars over five years. Negotiators are working over details of the contract at this point and no final prices have been set. DEAL TO MAKE OR BREAK TRASH MONOPOLY. With the end of its contract on the horizon next year, Wheelabrator at first proposed extending its monopoly for 20 years through 2033. Sun/Bergeron saw an opening and launched a lobbyist effort to block the renewal of the contract. The lobbying worked. Enough cities, and eventually the Broward County Commission, voted to reject renewal with Wheelabrator. They gambled that better rates could be obtained by pitting Wheelabrator against Sun/Bergeron in competitive bids. Miramar agreed to be the first city to ask for competitive bids from the two disposal companies.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Wheelabrator's bid was \$52.50 per ton, compared with Sun/Bergeron's \$43.25 per ton. Sun/Bergeron got the nod, and a deal is being negotiated. The negotiations by the county and other cities is their attempt to fine-tune the Miramar bid to see if an even a better deal can be reached. Sun/Bergeron is a joint venture, which is headquartered in Davie in an industrial area near I-595. Sun Recycling, the operating partner, is a subsidiary of the veteran waste company Southern Waste Services of Lantana. Bergeron Environmental and Recycling is the latest venture of Broward entrepreneur Ron Bergeron, who is already a dominant force in road building, storm recovery, real estate and rock pits. Medico, a long-time waste industry executive, is the chief negotiator for Sun/Bergeron. Medico told county negotiators that "supply and demand" would lower the price over the next five years because numerous new waste disposal sites are expected to open in South Florida, and there would be a "surplus of opportunities to dispose of waste." There sites in Miami-Dade, Lee and Okeechobee Counties. Palm Beach County is building a waste-to-energy incinerator that is scheduled to go online in 2015. Any site picked by Sun/Bergeron – like all legal disposal sites in Florida – would have gone through a rigorous permitting procedure by the state. "Any waste will have a final resting place in a legally permitted class one facility," Medico said.

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES? Speaking to negotiators this week, Medico warned that Broward should not make the same mistake it did in the 1980s by binding disposal to one company's sites. The county missed opportunities to lower prices because "you were tied up in a 25-year monopoly. You didn't have a choice" about what sites to use, Medico said. Under the rules of the negotiating sessions, each company gets a day to be grilled and explain its position on why they should be chosen to dispose of Broward's waste. The discussion of the sites came on Thursday when county staffers and two city managers – Lee Feldman of Fort Lauderdale and David Rivera of Coconut Creek – were going over Sun/Bergeron's proposal line-by-line. Thursday was Sun/Bergeron's day to be questioned. Wheelabrator's Vice President of Operations Bill Roberts and Senior Legal Counsel Emily Kahn sat in the audience taking notes. In an interview earlier with Broward Bulldog at Wheelabrator's sprawling computerized incinerator plant in Davie, Roberts made his case for his company to continue the contract. "We have a proven technology that's reliable...The infrastructure exists. These facilities are strategically located," Roberts said. He added that having the disposal sites in Broward contributed \$23 million in wages, goods and services and other indirect spending to the county's economy. He said disposing waste locally takes vehicles off the road because it doesn't have to be transported to another county. "Our system has worked very well for 20 years," he said.

The county led negotiations are scheduled to conclude and go to the County Commission for its approval by May 8. On paper the negotiations only involve the small slice of Broward that is unincorporated, but several cities are expected to piggyback on the agreement, hence the presence of Feldman and Rivera. Deputy County Attorney Noel Pfeffer, who is leading the negotiations, said the company that is chosen is expected to go out and sell the agreement to the 26 cities now using Wheelabrator. "There will be some period of time (built into the final contract) for the company to go out and market the agreement," he said.

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COMPETITION AND LOWER RATES. Competition has already driven down the price of disposing of garbage in Broward. More price pressure is likely. For instance, there is an overcapacity at Wheelabrator's South Broward waste-to-energy plant. The plant was built to handle 1.5 million tons a year. A few years ago it was processing 1.2 million tons. Today, it's just 900,000 tons due to the failure to forecast increases in recycling and the struggling economy. "In the end, they have to have waste to keep that facility going. If they lose this contract and aren't getting enough waste, they'll cut the price and accept waste from other counties," predicted a waste industry source. Roberts confirmed that Wheelabrator's local facilities would have to take waste from other counties if they failed to get enough from Broward. One company that could conceivably help fill Wheelabrator's plant is Sun/Bergeron, if rates drop far enough. Sun/Bergeron would collect the waste at transfer stations in Davie and elsewhere, then send it to the plant for disposal. "We have a contract with them for disposal in other places," Medico said.

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Sun Sentinel (FL)

December 4, 2011

**County Moves at Slow Pace as Businesses Build, Officials in Government Deliberate**

Author: Brittany Wallman

Tired of delays in building a convention center hotel, Broward County commissioners set a deadline of midnight to get a contract signed. Alas, that was 11 years ago. There's still no hotel. Years have passed, too, since the public first heard that a new election headquarters would be built in Broward, and a new county courthouse. Two more projects that have been talked about and worked on for years: a ship "turning notch" and ship-to-rail facility in Port Everglades. A new airport runway has been in the headlines for decades. Why is government so dang slow? "It's painful. It's absolutely painful," Broward Commissioner Lois Wexler said. "It's a disgraceful wonder." Fort Lauderdale developer Alan Hooper has listened to the public discussions about the runway and other projects, while he and his business partner built and opened Tarpon Bend Food & Tackle restaurant, Avenue Lofts, New River Trading Post, and The Mill and The Foundry residential lofts in Fort Lauderdale and opened Yolo restaurant and Vibe lounge, all in Fort Lauderdale. "Time is money," Hooper said, "and we can't waste too much of either." In the same period that Broward focused time, energy and money on the same few unfinished projects, a lot was accomplished in the rest of the world. Navy SEALs found and killed Osama bin Laden. National health care was passed. Downtown Fort Lauderdale erupted in high-rises. The Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino opened in Hollywood.

Back in Broward, Wexler was waiting Thursday for a lobbyist to talk to her about that election headquarters. "And the beat goes on, and on, and on," she said. Businesswoman Barbara Sharief, a self-made multi-millionaire who is new to the County Commission, said the belaboring of things "over and over again" is "probably one of the most frustrating things about being on the commission." The county is like a \$3.2 billion business, she said, and delays hurt when it comes to projects that would build up the economy. The long-planned deepening and widening of Port Everglades would position Broward to handle super-freighters when the expansion of the Panama Canal is complete in 2014. But Miami has a port, too. "You sit around and twiddle your thumbs for too long," Sharief said, "and your competition's going to pass you by."

From the helm of Broward's public works department, Director **Tom Hutka** has a different view. The reason government moves more slowly than a private business would, he said, is they stand in the public eye, they seek competitive bids for the best price, they consider neighborhood concerns. It's not because they don't work as hard, or they're less efficient, he said. Especially now after several years of budget cuts, which forced government to "really look at everything and question the way of doing things."

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**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel (FL)  
September 23, 2011

**Broward Sues Southeast Underground Utilities, Contractor on County Intersections**

Author: *Brittany Wallman*

Broward County has filed suit against Southeast Underground Utilities, the company that was working on county intersections and whose relationship with traffic engineer Jihad El Eid is now under the eye of the FBI. The county's Aug. 3 lawsuit, which is being handled by county chief trial attorney Michael Kerr, alleges that Southeast Underground overbilled the county at least \$3 million, and did work that was defective. I called the Davie-based company and left a message with a woman asking officials to comment on the lawsuit and the FBI probe. If they do, I'll update this.

Broward hired Southeast Underground after a competitive process in 2006, and the contract was effective as of Jan. 25, 2007, for \$4.4 million, with some renewal options. It ballooned into a \$21.3 million contract. The company was to install and restore underground conduit. The contract was expanded to have Southeast upgrade the traffic signal system by replacing old conduits and copper wires with new conduits and fiber optic wires. That job was expanded once again to include replacing the wire-hung traffic signals with the black, metal mast-arms we see in major intersections now. The contract was terminated Jan. 24, 2010.

El Eid, who was not accomplishing the traffic light synching drivers were begging for, was dismissed from the county by then-new Public Works Director **Tom Hutka**. Now El Eid is working for the city of Amarillo, Texas, and is "certainly a person of interest" to the FBI, his attorney, the local Fred Haddad, told us this summer. But he's not been charged with any crimes, nor accused by the FBI of wrongdoing. The FBI executed a search warrant at Southeast's offices in late June. FBI spokesman James Marshall said Thursday that the El Eid-Southeast Underground investigation is still ongoing. It was prompted by an anonymous letter alleging an improper friendship between the public servant and county vendor.

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Sun Sentinel (FL)  
September 5, 2011

**Traffic Signal Upgrades Smooth Out Commutes****Upgrades to Traffic System will Let Engineers Change Signals Remotely After Accidents**

Author: Michael Turnbell

Broward County is embarking on a \$25 million upgrade of its 25-year-old traffic signal system that will give engineers the ability to override signal timing in real time - without going to the intersection - if an accident, crime scene or special event creates problems. For example, if an accident closes northbound Interstate 95 before Commercial Boulevard, engineers would be ready with a response plan to alter signals on routes likely to become detours. "In just a few minutes we can come up with a new pattern at a particular intersection or along an entire corridor," said Scott Brunner, assistant director of the county's Traffic Engineering Division.

By 2016, Broward traffic engineers will be able to do everything from timing signals remotely to giving buses the ability to keep green lights green longer. And they won't have to fret every time there's a thunderstorm or if a contractor hits a cable underground, because the signal timing won't be affected. Poorly timed traffic signals are among commuters' biggest gripes, leading to wasted fuel, lost productivity and time, and road rage. The U.S. Department of Transportation has estimated as many as three out of four of the nation's 300,000 traffic signals need to be replaced or re-timed. In March, Broward finished re-timing signals on 19 major east-west roads plus University Drive and U.S. 1. Drivers now can hit a string of green lights sometimes stretching for miles, instead of keeping their foot on the brake to stop at red lights.

Engineers focused on east-west roads first because motorists on those streets lack high-speed alternatives that their north-south counterparts enjoy with I-95, Florida's Turnpike, Sawgrass Expressway and I-75. Now the county's light-synching workers, dubbed the Green Light Strike Force, hope to finish work on 10 major north-south roads by the end of 2011. They'll also re-time signals on Peters Road, stretches of Griffin Road and Sheridan Street west of Flamingo Road, and on Glades Parkway/Royal Palm Boulevard, Weston Road and Indian Trace, all in Weston. So far they've finished Flamingo Road and a stretch of State Road 7 in the middle of the county. And they're continuing to fine-tune streets they've already visited, like U.S. 1. Commuters are taking notice.

Ghanima Morales, of North Lauderdale, emailed the county in July that he's noticeably less stressed because the signals on his commute are timed better. "This is possibly the greatest thing that has been initiated in my 10 years of driving," Morales wrote. Marcy Whitaker wrote, "The first time I experienced the benefits of the program ... I thought it was my lucky day and bought a Lotto ticket." But not everyone is happy. As the county has improved traffic flow on major roads, it often has come at the expense of side streets where traffic is forced to wait longer for a green light. "When I drive on Northwest 81st Street to Pine Island Road, the light is so long," Jerry Yardley said. "There are times when I come out to a major road with no traffic and still have to wait at the light for minutes. At night time, it is very frustrating." Engineers know they

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have more work to do. They've installed new software at 82 intersections on two east-west corridors - Broward Boulevard and Pines/Hollywood Boulevard. About 200 intersections in downtown Fort Lauderdale soon will be added to the new system. By 2016, all 1,400 intersections in the county are scheduled to be finished. The software will enable engineers to adjust timing remotely and allow individual signal control boxes to keep the correct timing as a backup if the connection between the signal and the county's main computer is damaged or disrupted.

It works: Several times this summer thunderstorms have severed communication between the main computer and the signals on Pines Boulevard, yet the signals kept functioning properly, according to engineers. The county also is placing devices aboard buses that extend the green-light time so buses approaching intersections can make it through. It's designed to get late buses back on schedule. Next year, engineers will begin working to get intersecting major streets working well, a mesh the county calls the "basket weave."

"That's where it gets more complicated," county Public Works Director **Tom Hutka** said. "We'll be using computer modeling to figure out compromises at intersections." For instance, in the morning rush hour, engineers have to figure out a timing pattern that moves traffic swiftly eastbound without penalizing drivers headed in the opposite direction or on north-south streets. "We can make one direction perfect or the other perfect, but we can't make both perfect," **Hutka** said. After a year of vast improvements in signal timing, improvements next year will be more incremental. But every week drivers should notice a difference. "We can't promise you all green lights," he said. "But we're doing everything we can to reduce the number of red lights you stop at."

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Broward Bulldog (FL)

July 13, 2011

**Broward Cuts \$107 Million Trash Deal; Calls Start to Disband Resource Recovery Board**

Author: Dan Christensen

Saying it had gotten the best deal it could, Broward's Resource Recovery Board six months ago urged the county to approve its controversial 10-year, \$1.5 billion no-bid trash disposal agreement with giant Waste Management. But Broward County commissioners balked, asking staff instead to negotiate a better deal. The county's skepticism has paid off: before adjourning for summer vacation this month, commissioners unanimously approved a less risky short-term deal worth hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional cost savings to Broward cities and millions in new lease income to the county. The two-year, \$107.3 million disposal agreement is already being felt among cities that participate in the county's solid waste disposal agreement with Wheelabrator, the Waste Management subsidiary that owns and operates Broward's two waste-to-energy plants in Pompano Beach and Fort Lauderdale.

Last week, Oakland Park commissioners voted on first reading to decrease residential trash service rates by 15 percent, or \$3.75 a month – a reduction City Manager John Stunson attributed to the county's new deal. There's been political fallout, too. County Commissioner John Rodstrom, who led the charge for a better deal, told Broward Bulldog that the Resource Recovery Board – elected city and county officials who oversee the disposal of solid waste for 26 Broward cities and unincorporated Broward – must go. "What they were offering us was just ridiculous," Rodstrom said. "The board should be disbanded." He added that \$40 million remaining from a reserve fund to cover recently paid off construction bonds be divided up between the county and the cities. Another \$20 million from that pot went last week to encourage "single-stream" recycling that allows mixing bottles, cans and newspapers in a recycling bin, Rodstrom said. 'Big changes have to occur' Broward Commissioner Lois Wexler, who wants the next long term disposal agreement to be bid out, "would not resist" dissolution. "I think big changes have to occur and big changes include trust, direction and leadership," she said. Wexler mentioned no names, but the RRB's executive director is former state legislator Ron Greenstein. Its chair is County Commissioner Ilene Lieberman, sometimes referred to on the commission as the county's "queen of trash." Oakland Park Mayor Suzanne Boisvenue, a member of the Resource Recovery Board, says the board has made itself irrelevant. "I don't see why the board is needed," said Boisvenue, one of nine board members. "We have a lot of politics and nonsense going on there we don't need."

While last December's proposal by the Resource Recovery Board included significant rate cuts, it came under withering fire from municipal officials who said it didn't go far enough and amounted to a huge giveaway to a multi-billion dollar corporation flush with years of excessive profits made at the expense of Broward customers. The alternative agreement approved by the county commission on June 28 is an interim deal negotiated during the countdown to an Aug. 4 expiration of the decades-old service agreement with Wheelabrator's south plant. The north plant agreement expires next March. Officials intend to negotiate a longer-term agreement with

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Wheelabrator by July 2, 2013 – the expiration of the existing interlocal disposal agreement among the municipalities that make up Broward’s Solid Waste District. A memo to commissioners by Public Works Director **Thomas Hutka** said the options to be explored will include a further extension of Wheelabrator’s contract, a greater emphasis on recycling to reduce the demand on Wheelabrator’s plants, trucking a portion of the garbage to a disposal site in Palm Beach and finding service through other private providers. How the next agreement is reached, and which cities participate in it, will mostly be determined by price. Last year, chafing at Waste Management’s long-standing monopoly and the Resource Recovery Board’s decision not to put the new disposal contract out for bids, a number of cities indicated they might cut their own deals. Miramar recently took bids on its request for proposals for solid waste disposal. Bid prices remain sealed, but the two bidders – Wheelabrator and a joint venture by Bergeron Environmental and Recycling and Sun Recycling – met with city officials this week to describe their proposals. Other cities have indicated they might join with Miramar if a good enough deal can be found. Bergeron looks to become a player. The bid by the Bergeron group signals a determination by wealthy Davie developer and land baron Ron Bergeron to become a player in Broward’s lucrative municipal solid waste disposal business. This spring, Bergeron sought a zoning change in Pembroke Pines that would have allowed him to recycle solid waste at his recycling facility on 57 acres of industrial property off U.S. 27 on the edge of the Everglades. He withdrew his application after unhappy neighbors began to mobilize.

Bergeron, a man of significant political influence in Broward, already has a contract with the county to dispose of hurricane debris. His partner in the Miramar bid is his longtime friend Anthony Lomangino, the chairman and founder of Sun’s parent, Lantana-based Southern Waste Systems. The county’s new disposal agreement sets the base tipping fee at \$57 per ton starting next month at the Fort Lauderdale plant and next March at the Pompano Beach plant. The current rate at the north plant is \$72.57 per ton. Prior contract provisions that allowed Waste Management to hike the tab for inflation and other factors have been eliminated – including the so-called “put-or-pay” requirement that forced cities to kick in extra cash if they didn’t deliver a specified amount of waste within a given period. “These projected rates...are very similar to what the December 2010 (Resource Recovery Board) proposal would have produced, but with significantly less risk to the county and a much shorter term,” says **Hutka**’s memo. In all, the memo says, members of Broward’s solid waste district will save about \$380,000 in fees to Wheelabrator compared to the Resource Recovery Board’s proposal. A new lease also significantly ups the rent Wheelabrator must pay to the county every year to lease the Fort Lauderdale plant site [the north site is privately owned.] The current lease provides for an annual payment of \$100,000. The annual lease that starts next month on the 162-acre site makes that payment \$1.1 million for each of the next five years. A perception that Waste Management has earned an exorbitant profit on the backs of its Broward customers caused **Hutka** to have his staff to examine Wheelabrator’s finances and conduct an analysis of the deal. “The analysis showed that the proposed service agreement would provide what staff considers a reasonable (not excessive) level of income for Wheelabrator...considerably lower” than for any of the past five years, the memo says. Still, the staff’s look-see will remain largely an exercise in faith for any who choose to believe it. “Due to the confidentiality provisions of the existing agreements, staff cannot reveal any specifics of this analysis in a public document,” the memo says.



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Sun Sentinel (FL)  
November 2, 2010

**Sewage Beach Marine Environment Pollution Issue  
Is Treated Sewage Safe for the Sea?  
Broward Fights State Mandate to Stop Ocean Dumping, Saying Residents' Bills Would Double**

Author: David Fleshler and Brittany Wallman

Broward County wants to escape a state mandate to shut down a pipe that discharges treated sewage into the ocean off Pompano Beach, saying the cost would be huge and the environmental payoff negligible. The pipe is one of six in Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties ordered closed by a 2008 state law, after a campaign by environmentalists who argued the pipes were polluting coral reefs and wasting fresh water. The law, which set a deadline of 2025, requires wastewater authorities to improve treatment systems so the water can be used for purposes such as irrigating golf courses, watering lawns and recharging underground water supplies. The Broward County Commission learned last month that it would cost about \$800 million to construct such systems. Sewage bills for the pipe's northern Broward users would more than double, with the average customer's bill rising from \$33.09 to \$69.48.

Now the county is aiming for a way around the requirement - by a change in the law, a waiver or some other exemption.

**Thomas Hutka**, Broward's public works director, said spending hundreds of millions to pump the water into the Floridan aquifer or to lay pipes to spray it on lawns "is not a cost-effective use of taxpayer funds." "The county will continue to work with the state as we have since the year 2007 so that we can continue using the ocean outfall, which we believe to be both cost-effective and environmentally sound," **Hutka** said.

Alan Garcia, the county's water and wastewater director, said the water already is 90 percent clean. "If you take a jar out of our treatment plant it's as clear as can be," he said. "There are no solids in it. It's not yellow or green." Ed Tichenor, director of Palm Beach County Reef Rescue, an environmental group that led the campaign to close the pipes, said environmental advocates would put up "quite a fight" to prevent Broward from keeping the pipe in service. "Solids aren't the problem," Tichenor said. "It's the nutrients, it's the pharmaceuticals, it's the pathogens and viruses that survive the initial treatment. And one reason they passed this legislation was a water shortage in southeast Florida, and southeast Florida doesn't recycle water like the rest of the state." The pipe off Delray Beach shut down last year. Boca Raton expects to be reusing 100 percent of its water by 2015, using the pipeline only for seasonal overflows, said Chris Helfrich, the city's utilities director. Hollywood and Miami-Dade County are exploring options, both saying the change would require a massive investment in new treatment systems.

The Broward-operated pipe, installed in the mid-1970s, discharges 32 million to 34 million gallons of treated sewage daily from Parkland, Pompano Beach, Deerfield Beach, Coral Springs, Tamarac, Oakland Park, Lauderhill, North Lauderdale, Coconut Creek, Lauderdale Lakes, part

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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of unincorporated Broward and a small part of Fort Lauderdale. Environmentalists have blamed this and other pipes for discharging nutrients such as ammonia that fertilize the growth of algae that smothers coral reefs. State legislators said the region can't afford to dump that much fresh water at sea when the region is facing permanent water-use restrictions. Broward Vice Mayor Sue Gunzburger said, "If there's anything we can do to avoid meeting that standard by 2025," Broward wants to do it. "It's a very expensive, unfunded mandate that I don't think would make much difference when it comes to the ocean," Gunzburger said. "The most telling fact is that most of the nutrients that go into the sea are not from the wastewater effluent but from storm water discharge."

Although there have been several swimming advisories in Broward for high bacteria levels over the past year, environmental officials inspected the pipes and plants and found no malfunctions. Health officials say the more likely source of contamination was animal waste washed into the water from birds and other wildlife.

Broward Commissioner Kristin Jacobs, who is known as an environmentalist, said the state mandate was not based on sound science and the alternatives have their own environmental issues. "It is not the intent of Broward County to slip one past the people," said Jacobs. "What we're looking for is a science-based solution." But she said she doubts the county will be allowed to keep using the outfall. "There are politicians who used this in their brochure for their next election: 'I shut off the ocean outfall.' They're going to come back and give us some grace to deal with this issue? I'm skeptical."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel (FL)

October 21, 2010

**Find the Fat: Why is This Broward Employee Resting in His Truck?**

Author: Brittany Wallman

Be assured that some of our readers are looking out for the taxpayers. Mary Graham, a reader of this blog, is one of the readers who are heeding the call to "find the fat" in the Broward County budget. She snapped photos of a county employee she said was "resting" in his vehicle with the engine running, and sent the photos to county officials, and to me. She said she has "observed many municipal vehicles occupied but parked and engines running for A/C at locations around the county. The locations are odd and the times are rarely lunch time. So when I spotted this today about 2:25 pm in a parking lot with the driver 'resting', I thought you may want to know. ... Frankly I am not real pleased to see tax dollars expended in this fashion, unless there is a real good explanation. Please." Suffice to say the employee in this photo got in trouble.

Public Works Director **Tom Hutka** told Graham in an e-mail that "we are in full agreement with you that all of our tax dollars must be spent wisely, and work very hard to make sure our operations in Broward County are at maximum efficiency." Here is Public Works Director **Hutka's** response to resident Mary Graham:

----- Original Message ----- From: **Hutka, Thomas** To: mga-aia@ix.netcom.com Cc: Corwin, Pete; Henry, Bertha; Keechl, Ken; Gunzburger, Suzanne; Wexler, Lois; Lukic, Evan; Wallman, Brittany; Hui, Tony; Ton, Anh Sent: 10/6/2010 2:32:41 PM Subject: RE: job description Please

Ms. Graham:

Thank you for bringing this issue to our attention. We are in full agreement with you that all of our tax dollars must be spent wisely, and work very hard to make sure our operations in Broward County are at maximum efficiency.

We researched the situation regarding the employee identified in your photograph. The employee was a member of a three-person crew that was working to pump down the road flooding caused by Tropical Storm Nicole. The crew worked through their normal lunch period at noon, and then took their lunch break late on that day. Two members of the crew took their lunches elsewhere and the third member, seen in your photograph, parked the vacuum truck in a convenience store parking lot on the corner of NW 31 Avenue and Prospect Road. The late lunch break was confirmed by a roving supervisor who was responsible for several work crews deployed that day to alleviate flooding around the County.

The County has written procedures against sleeping in County vehicles and running engines unnecessarily. This employee violated those procedures and will be subjected to appropriate disciplinary action.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The County has several mechanisms to ensure that employees are working effectively and efficiently, including GPS devices and mileage/gas usage tracking. Many times these methods are effective in ensuring employee productivity. Nevertheless, we work continually to ensure that our employees are properly supervised and managed and that they work on their jobs effectively. We want to thank you again for your assistance in bringing this matter to our attention. We assure you that it will be acted on.

**Tom Hutka** Public Works Director Broward County

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.browardpalmbeach.com/news/the-untold-story-of-browards-other-traffic-cameras-part-ii-6470156>

October 20, 2010

**The Untold Story of Broward's Other Traffic Cameras: Part II**

Author: Stefan Kamph

You're sitting in a car, waiting for the light to change, when you notice a spindly little white camera peering down at you. Is this a red-light camera? Some sinister plot to spy on drivers? Nope, just a new way to control traffic at Broward's busy intersections. Last week, we covered the basics of what these cameras do. Now we'll take a look inside one of the traffic-signal control boxes, located near the Traffic Management division's headquarters on West Commercial Boulevard. The cameras send a video signal to a control box at each intersection, where a computer detects the positions of cars in the first few spaces of each lane. This affects light timing. For example, if no cars are waiting in the left-turn lane, the green arrow won't come on.

Broward Public Works Director **Tom Hutka** told New Times that in most instances, the video signal never leaves the intersection. But the boxes do have monitor hookups that allow you to see what the camera sees. "You can see that the cameras don't pick up much detail," says Traffic Signals Supervisor Brett Henderson as he flips on a monitor. A few thumbnail-sized outlines of blurry cars appear on the monitor. There's an overlay defining each spot for a waiting vehicle, and the spots light up as cars enter them: Here's the system that collects and processes the video feed, adding the overlay and gathering information about which lanes are full. Every night, the signals send a report to a central mainframe, where engineers look for anomalies like lights that are failing to cycle or are timed wrong. Here are some more fun facts:

Traffic engineers don't call yellow lights "yellow." They call them "amber."

- Do the cameras stay put in a hurricane or tropical storm? Don't bet on it. Crews go out to check on all of them after a big storm.
- East- and west-facing cameras have to be positioned higher up on their poles, so they can be angled down more to avoid the glare of sunrises and sunsets.
- Complaints about light timing may actually be caused by pedestrians smacking the crossing buttons and then crossing early anyway.
- Speaking of those buttons... if they break, the county actually likes to fix them. So they say. Go to Broward's contact page and give it a shot.

Henderson says the county is always getting wrongly blamed for the red-light camera programs, which are approved by municipalities and administered by Arizona-based American Traffic Solutions. ATS is in talks with the county over one aspect of those operations, though. Currently, ATS sensors aren't allowed to interfere with traffic signals, so they use cameras to sense when a red light comes on. The company wants to install an electromagnetic loop around the wire powering the red bulb -- which is maintained by the county. Negotiations are ongoing, according to **Hutka**.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thomas J. Hutka**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.browardpalmbeach.com/news/the-untold-story-of-browards-other-traffic-cameras-6454775>

October 14, 2010

**The Untold Story of Broward's Other Traffic Cameras**

Author: Stefan Kamph

So, you've probably heard about the proliferation of red-light cameras around South Florida. You may have seen last month's news that Fort Lauderdale was adopting the program, beginning with installation of the cameras at ten intersections. But, wait... only ten? What about those white poles and sinister-looking cameras with wispy antennas that you see at nearly every intersection around downtown Fort Lauderdale? Some of you, like me, may have been extra-cautious with your right turns around these eyes in the sky, expecting a \$150 ticket for any infraction. Pay no mind, fair citizen. The ubiquitous white cameras are of a whole different breed.

"They're just to see if there are cars in the lane, so the lights can decide when to cycle," says Broward Public Works Director **Tom Hutka**. "With one or two exceptions, the video signal doesn't leave the intersection." More on those "exceptions" in a minute. The cameras replace the old electromagnetic loop system for detecting cars -- you may notice dark lines in geometric patterns covering the end of each lane at an intersection. The video cameras send a feed -- "not detailed enough to recognize faces or license plates," **Hutka** assures us -- to a computer system in a traffic-control box about the size of a refrigerator, located at each intersection. That computer interprets the signal, figures out how many cars are waiting in each lane, and adjusts light timing accordingly. "We're working through a program to replace the electric loop detectors with video detection devices," explains **Hutka**. "We take advantage of [preexisting] road projects to close the lanes and install the cameras."

If there's a red-light ticketing camera waiting for you, you'll know -- those intersections have to be marked with a sign saying the intersection is "photo enforced." They provide real video feeds to real people who can see who you are. These cameras, on the other hand? "There's very little detail, not so much that there's a privacy concern," says **Hutka**. "Also, we don't save the video signal."

A recent pilot project on Commercial Boulevard allowed the video signal to leave the intersections, traveling to a central facility. Crews installed fiber optic cables instead of the usual analog copper wires, enabling the transmission of video for remote monitoring. But **Hutka** insists that nobody's using this capability and that there are no plans to advance it. "There's a handful of intersections that we can watch in our home office, but nobody watches," he says.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel (FL)  
September 3, 2010

**Drivers See Green with Re-Times Lights. Traffic Engineers Promise to Ease Stop-and-Go Conditions on 21 Major Roads Across Broward**

Author: Brittany Wallman and Michael Turnbell

Drivers on Broward Boulevard might have already noticed it: All these green lights! For the first time in years, drivers commuting into or out of downtown Fort Lauderdale on Broward Boulevard can actually make it a mile, or two, or three, or four - or more - without hitting a single red light. The same is true on University Drive in the center of the county, where drivers are hitting more green lights than ever. They're spending less time sitting at the reds. The outcry from angry drivers finally has been heard. Broward County officials just announced that they've re-timed traffic signals on the eastern part of Broward Boulevard and much of University Drive, so drivers traveling the speed limit will hit green light after green light after green light. The maddening stop-and-go that drivers endure all over will be eased by early 2011, county officials promise. Signals on 19 major east-west corridors, plus the entire north-south stretches of U.S. 1 and University Drive in Broward County, will be re-timed. After that, a year's worth of more complicated and expensive synchronization is promised; it would re-time more of the road network, adding north-south roads to finesse what traffic engineers call the "basket weave" of intersecting streets.

"We can't promise all green lights," Broward public works director **Thomas Hutka** said, "but we're reducing the number of times you stop at red lights." **Hutka** was hired last year and made the synchronizing of lights "absolutely a priority." He brought the top traffic engineers into one office - they named themselves the Green Light Strike Force - and they work on re-timing signals every day. A website's been set up, and a phone hotline is ready; both will be used to solicit opinions from the driving public. **Hutka** said the Strike Force set out two months ago to make a noticeable improvement to signal snarl using existing staff and hardware, at no additional cost to the county taxpayers. The team re-timed lights on Broward Boulevard from University Drive east to U.S. 1., and on University Drive, from Oakland Park Boulevard to Griffin Road. With the exception of University Drive and U.S. 1, the team's initial signal timing efforts are focused on east-west roads because north-south commuters have high-speed options via Interstate 95, Florida's Turnpike and the Sawgrass Expressway/Interstate 75. The next complicated step will be timing signals on north-south roads and coordinating them with east-west routes. The work is part of a 15-year, \$85.6 million overhaul of the signal network. Timing traffic signals in a progression for drivers is an industry standard and "one of the most cost-effective ways to improve traffic flows and reduce motorist travel time," county auditor Evan Lukic noted in a 2008 investigation. Drivers pleaded for it. County commissioners promised it. Yet, the auditor's office found, Broward County failed to deliver it, falling far short of "industry best practice." The county devoted insufficient staff to the work and let years pass without revisiting signals on heavily traveled thoroughfares such as Griffin Road. The result of the county's lackluster work: Drivers in Broward County the past decade spent more time at red lights than they should have, their drive times were longer than they needed to be, and they



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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wasted gas, auditors said. Before now, it was nearly impossible to travel east or west on Broward Boulevard without hitting half a dozen or more red lights. Now, drivers can make it through more than 20 green lights in a row. On University Drive, **Hutka** said he hit a "small traffic jam" every morning heading south between Sunrise and Broward boulevards. "In the last month," he said, "I haven't done that at all. That alone took five minutes off my commute." The system isn't perfect. On any given day, traffic accidents, gridlock, trains, emergency vehicles that preempt the lights, or road construction and lane squeezes will screw up the light synching. But it'll still be an improvement on what drivers are used to. Another facet of the fix: The county will improve traffic detection on side streets so drivers on the main roads aren't stopped unnecessarily. "When you're driving on a major street and you see a red light turn in front of you for no apparent reason," **Hutka** said, "or because one or two cars are coming in from the side street, this is what it's all about. This will significantly reduce the number of those occurrences."

Broward County is in the midst of a \$14.5 million project to install video detectors at 700 intersections countywide. When the work is completed in about 3 years, 1,250 intersections in the county will have the new technology. The detectors look like cameras mounted on traffic signal poles, but they don't take pictures or record video. Instead, they detect how many cars are lined up at intersections. The images are analyzed by computers that determine how much green time a traffic signal should provide. Let's say a signal is programmed to give 15 seconds of green time for a left turn. If the left turn lane is empty after five seconds, the detector will turn off the left turn arrow and assign the unused 10 seconds of "green time" to drivers going straight through the intersection. That means the green light will last longer for the majority of drivers. Drivers like Pete Tozzi said traffic signals on "pipsqueak" cross streets hold up traffic on major roads. Heading west on Pines Boulevard at rush hour, Tozzi said Pines drivers routinely get stopped for one or two cars entering Pines from 129th and 136th avenues. But the light stays green even though no more traffic is coming. Signals on Pines are scheduled for re-timing later this year. "One would think those two streets are the main thoroughfare with their prolonged green lights," he said. "I could personally drive around and improve traffic with a little common thinking and light time changes."

On Southwest 10th Street, drivers complain of constant stop-and-go conditions between Federal Highway and the Sawgrass Expressway because of poorly timed traffic signals. "At all times of day or night you get stopped at 90 percent of the traffic signals. It is intolerable," said Joseph Healey, who commutes from Coral Springs to Boca Raton. That busy connector between I-95 and the Sawgrass is scheduled for re-timing later this year. But rush hour drivers still likely will be held up at some red lights, as traffic engineers balance the need to keep traffic flowing on north-south highways that intersect it, like Military Trail, Powerline Road and even the I-95 exit ramps to prevent traffic from backing up onto the interstate. "If you hit just one red light, you can be assured that you will hit them all," said Carol Finkelstein, of Boca Raton. As the county gives new focus to drivers' frustration, **Hutka** said he's considering all options, including what Miami-Dade County does on some major roads like Biscayne Boulevard: putting signals into flashing mode - flashing red and yellow - between midnight and 5 a.m. to allow traffic on the major street to flow without stopping. "It's something we want to study more," **Hutka** said. But if the signal re-timing is a success, he said, that might not be necessary.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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US Fed News (USA)

September 17, 2009

**Broward County Names New Director of Public Works**

Author: Judy Sarver

Broward County has issued the following news release:

**Thomas J. Hutka** has been named the new director of the Public Works Department for Broward County. He assumed his new position on September 4, bringing more than 28 years of municipal and county government experience to Broward County. Prior to joining the County, he was the director of municipal program management with the HNTB Corporation out of their Indianapolis office.

The Broward County Public Works Department includes eight county divisions, including construction management, facilities maintenance, highway and bridge maintenance, highway construction and engineering, seaport engineering and construction, traffic engineering, water and wastewater services, and waste and recycling services. **Hutka** will oversee a budget of almost \$400 million and more than 1,000 employees.

In making the announcement, Bertha Henry, Broward County Administrator, said, "We are extremely pleased that Mr. **Hutka** is joining our staff. His extensive experience in the public works field is impressive. I look forward to his leadership as the director of the Public Works Department."

Prior to joining HNTB Corporation in 2006, **Hutka** was the city manager for Port Huron, Mich.; assistant county manager for Osceola County, Fla.; and associate county administrator for capital programs for Hennepin County-Minneapolis, Minn. He has also led public works, finance and growth management programs in positions in Cleveland, Ohio; Raleigh, North Carolina; and New York City.

**Hutka** is a highly respected national and international public works subject matter expert. He has addressed professional associations such as the American Public Works Association International, International Council of Shopping Centers, American Water Works Association and National Council for Public-Private Partnerships. His articles have appeared in such professional publications as Public Management, APWA Reporter and Credit Week.

**Hutka** has a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from Princeton (N.J.) University and a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. For more information please contact: Sarabjit Jagirdar, Email:- [htsyndication@hindustantimes.com](mailto:htsyndication@hindustantimes.com)

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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South Bend Tribune (IN)

October 25, 2005

**City a Beacon of Hope for Lighthouse**

City officials have received federal approval to take ownership of the Fort Gratiot Lighthouse. The ownership transfer, which was recommended by the National Park Service and approved Friday, comes after about five years of work by officials for the city and Port Huron Museum, which will operate the 176-year-old structure. "The Fort Gratiot Lighthouse is such a significant part of this community's history," Stephen R. Williams, Port Huron Museum director, told the Times Herald for a Saturday story. "And that historic symbol is going to keep standing now and be around for generations to come."

Williams said efforts will include restoring the exterior to how it appeared in the 1930s or '40s. The entire project will cost about \$1 million, and work could start late next year, he said. After advances in technology made them obsolete, the U.S. Coast Guard began transferring ownership of lighthouses to eliminate the cost of maintaining them. In 2000, the federal government passed a law giving cities and nonprofit groups the chance to own the lighthouses if they could show they would restore and preserve the structures.

The lighthouse will be a great addition to Port Huron's museum system, City Manager **Tom Hutka** said. "This is a symbol of the city and its history," he said. "And we think it's going to be an attraction that will help with our economic-development efforts."

Joel Garinger, of St. Clair Shores, Mich., said he comes up to the area about five times a year and makes a point of seeing the lighthouse. "It's nice to see that they're going to preserve it," he said. "I know a lot of people who are really into lighthouses, travel all over the place to see them. This will be something special for this area."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Detroit News (MI)

November 16, 2004

**Mich. Gets Terror Fight Technology  
But Critics Say Latest Equipment Installed in Port Huron is Ineffective and a Waste of Money**

Author: Frank Donnelly

It would behoove Osama Bin Laden to stay away from this Michigan city when trying to infiltrate the United States. The border town was one of three cities that unfurled the latest in terrorism-fighting technology Monday. But critics have already labeled the \$700 million program, which takes photos and fingerprints of some foreign visitors, a hornswaggle. They say it will be too expensive, too shortsighted and too ineffective. The only people it will impede from crossing the border, critics said, are travelers and business people. "It's slow enough," said Rick Bunin, 56, a Sarnia mechanic who sometimes works on the U.S. side of the border. "It's one more line we need to wait on."

The system will be expanded to the two Detroit border crossings -- the Ambassador Bridge and the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel -- by the end of the year, possibly as early as Dec. 6, federal officials said. All 165 land border crossings in the United States will have the system in place by the end of 2005, said Kimberly Weissman, of Homeland Security. The nation's 115 airports and 14 seaports have used the program since January. Weissman defended the program, saying the process should be quick and seldom cause delays. That's a concern with Port Huron residents with its well-traveled crossing, the Blue Water Bridge. "We'll continue to evaluate it," she said. "We'll make necessary adjustments to ensure there aren't significant wait times." She said the process should take no more than 15 seconds.

The process, which affects only foreigners who need a visa to enter the U.S., actually began before the visitors reached the Port Huron border Monday. Their first step was to apply for a visa in their home country. Then, when they reached the U.S. border crossing, they inserted their index finger, right then left, into a fingerprinting machine. A digital camera snapped their picture. On the other side of the machine was a border crossing guard who asked the routine questions that all travelers are asked: Where are they going? How long will they be there? Port Huron's first day on the vanguard of the fight against terrorism went off without any major problems, Weissman said. The process for three visitors averaged several minutes apiece. The photo and fingerprint information went into a databank to ensure it matched the information the visitor had given earlier when applying for the visa.

The data also was compared with the FBI's criminal database and with government lists of terrorists. The info was checked against lists of sexual predators. Monday was the first time the so-called United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology program, US-VISIT for short, was used at a land crossing. Besides Port Huron, it also was kicked off at the Mexican crossings at Laredo, Texas and Douglas, Ariz. Federal officials said it was a pilot program geared toward catching mistakes before the system expands to the 50 busiest U.S. crossings by

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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the end of the year. While some border town politicians and businesses originally balked at the program, a Port Huron officials sounded a conciliatory note for the maiden voyage. "Anything that helps them identify who people are helps us," said **Thomas Hutka**, city manager of Port Huron. He said federal officials have allayed some city fears about the possible delays that could result from the terrorism protection. With one day under their belt, US-VISIT officials said it was too early to judge the program a success. But they said they would continue tinkering to ameliorate any problems.

Weissman said she wasn't aware of any serious stumbles on the first day in Port Huron. "It's too soon to tell," she said. "Of course we'll continue to evaluate and make any improvements when necessary." The system won't be used for all foreign visitors - just those who need a visa to enter the country. Most Canadians also will be exempt from the program. Critics have called the security program a feel-good measure designed more to placate the terrorism fears of residents than actually catch anyone.

When Congress created the system in the wake of September 11, it had hoped it would track foreign travelers who stayed in the U.S. far past the expiration date of their visas. Several of the foreigners involved in the terrorist act had overstayed their visas. But the current system can't track the departures of foreign visitors and program officials said it would be several years before they can do so.

Another critic, Rep. Jim Turner, D-Texas, also said the system doesn't go far enough. Rather than settle for two fingerprints, it would be better to get all them, like the FBI crime database does, he said. That also would raise the chances of getting matches between the border system and the FBI one, he said. Only two fingerprints would lead to more errors. But federal officials said the 10-fingerprint system would be far more costly, and time-consuming.

The Homeland Security department, which is overseeing the program, spent \$340 million to kick off the service. It has budgeted another \$340 million for 2005.

**Border checks**

\* The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is expanding to border crossings its airport program that fingerprints, photographs and runs checks on many non-U.S. visitors.

\* The pilot sites are at Laredo, Texas; Douglas, Ariz.; and Port Huron.

\* The program is expected to be used at all 165 U.S. land border crossings, including the tunnel and Ambassador Bridge in Detroit, by the end of 2005. It already is in place at U.S. airports and seaports.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Times Herald (MI)

April 26, 2006

**Cliff Schrader: City Manager `Had No Choice' But to Resign**

Author: Shannon Murphy and Mike Connell

On his radio show this morning, a former Port Huron council member said he'll explain the real reason why City Manager **Tom Hutka** is resigning. "He had no choice," Cliff Schrader said Tuesday. "He no longer has the support of the majority of the council." **Hutka**, who said he's leaving his \$118,000-a-year job for personal reasons, called that nonsense.

"Cliff has never let truth stand in the way of his radio announcements," he said. "This was entirely my decision." He also said rumors of his job being in peril are nothing new. "It's always an issue," **Hutka** said. "Every month for five years, without exception, I've had someone come up and say, 'I've heard rumors. ...'"

Schrader, who was mayor pro tem five years ago when **Hutka** was hired, does a morning radio commentary for WGRT 102.3-FM and writes a column for Blue Water Senior Options, a monthly newspaper. He often focuses on local politics. "They've been negotiating (his resignation) for months," he said of **Hutka** and the council. "Why all this spin? Why hide it? Here's a guy who's making all this money, has this great job with all these big projects going on, and we're supposed to believe he just walks away?" Schrader drew a parallel between **Hutka**'s resignation and the firing of his predecessor, Larry Osborn, in September 2000. "What happened here is not much different than what happened to Larry Osborn," he said. "The mayor sat down and said, 'We have the votes to fire you, but if you resign, we can work this out.' Larry decided to fight it tooth and nail. **Tom** saw the writing on the wall and decided to spare the city another big fight."

Different council members had different reactions to Schrader's analysis. "I've known Cliff for a number of years, and Cliff has always had a conspiracy theory about everything," Mayor Alan Cutcher said. "And I think it's just another one of his theories. There's no truth to this one." B. Mark Neal, the mayor pro tem, indicated Schrader was on target in saying **Hutka** had lost the council's backing. "I think over the last few months, his support has dwindled," Neal said. "It's (a matter of) not getting things done in a timely fashion and a combination of a lot of different things."

A year ago, Neal gave **Hutka** a poor evaluation and wrote: "We need to discuss his future, but I don't know if the votes are there to (fire him)." Asked if he would have voted to fire the city manager, Neal replied, "He and I disagreed on a number of things, and let's just leave it at that." **Hutka** acknowledged he had never been able to win the support of Neal or Councilwoman Sally Jacobs. In 2001, **Hutka** was hired on a 5-1-1 vote with Jacobs opposing him and Neal abstaining. "When I took the job, I thought I could win over the two who voted against me," **Hutka** said. "I was never able to accomplish that." Jacobs confirmed she remained lukewarm on the city manager. "I didn't vote to hire **Tom**. I was the one vote to not hire him," she said. "We

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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have had our differences in the past, and I didn't always give him the best evaluations. But he did start some good projects." Asked if she would have voted to fire him, she replied: "I really don't know how I can answer that. If you take a look at everything, I would not want to go through another Larry Osborn. I don't know if I could go through that again. I think if that was a decision that council had to make, I'd have to really think long and hard on that one."

Kim Prax, a former council member who voted to hire **Hutka** in 2001, said she suspects there's truth to both versions of why the city manager is leaving. "I think there have been some issues between **Tom** and the council," she said. "**Tom** probably wants to move on, and now was probably a good time for him to do that." She gave **Hutka** good marks. "I give **Tom** a lot of credit because he did come in at a very tumultuous time in the city's history, and he worked very hard to build a consensus," she said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thomas J. Hutka**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Times Herald (MI)  
April 25, 2006

**Port Huron City Manager Quits  
Hutka to Pursue Other Career Options**

Author: Molly Montag

Port Huron needs a new city manager. The City Council on Monday night unanimously accepted City Manager **Tom Hutka's** resignation request. **Hutka**, city manager since 2001, presented individual council members with his resignation earlier Monday. His last day will be June 30. Mayor Alan Cutcher said he had known for several weeks that **Hutka** was thinking about resigning. He wished him well. "He's been a challenge," Cutcher said. "And I have been a challenge." Saying he was not forced or asked to quit, **Hutka** said he was exploring other career options and plans to focus on his family. He would not say what options he was exploring. "I'm far enough along in discussions that I'm comfortable with a two-months notice," **Hutka** said.

Councilman Jim Fisher feared **Hutka's** resignation would be detrimental to development projects, including several downtown proposals. Among the projects and proposals council members have been discussing in recent months is the possible conversion of the Municipal Office Center into condominiums; the development of a hotel-waterpark-casino; and turning several city-owned parking lots into a mix of business and residential properties. "I have a fear that a minimum, if not a majority, on council would support delaying these projects until they die," Fisher said.

**Hutka** didn't share that concern. He said development supporters and city staff would continue to move the projects forward. "There are too many people working to see the many projects that have been started, completed," he said.

Richard Frasier, 61, said **Hutka** will be missed. The Bancroft Street resident hoped **Hutka's** replacement would respond as quickly to complaints. "I just hope they (the city) keep up with the blight programs," he said. "It's really made a difference."

Councilman B. Mark Neal, who has given **Hutka** unfavorable performance reviews in the past, would not say if the resignation was good for Port Huron. "**Tom** and I haven't always seen eye to eye, and I wish him well," he said.

Council members and city officials need to start searching for **Hutka's** replacement almost immediately, Councilman David Haynes said.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Times Herald (MI)

April 13, 2005

**Hutka Gets Mixed Job Reviews****Port Huron Mayor Says Manager Should Be Fired; Others Praise Work**

Author: Ryan Werbeck

It's become a rite of spring in Port Huron's city government: The City Council produces a wildly divergent slate of opinions on how **Tom Hutka** is performing as city manager. This year features Mayor B. Mark Neal, a longtime vocal critic of **Hutka**, wondering aloud if there are enough votes on the council to fire the city manager. The annual performance evaluations were made public Tuesday. **Hutka**, who's paid \$114,000 annually, was hired in 2001 to replace Larry Osborn, who was fired by the council in 2000 during a bitter political struggle within the city government. With written evaluations in place, **Hutka** can meet with council members face to face to discuss his job performance and respond in writing, both options he plans to pursue.

Councilmen Alan Cutcher, Jim Fisher, David Haynes and Mark Steinborn support **Hutka's** performance, while Neal and Councilwomen Sally Jacobs and Kim Prax said improvement is needed. "It's a shame with the staff working so hard and all of our accomplishments that council members Prax, Jacobs and Neal are attacking the integrity and ability of the city manager," **Hutka** said. "We're not going to let fighting and aggressive politics stand in the way of getting good things done for the city."

Most evaluations praised **Hutka** for work dealing with tight city finances and his relationship with the media. Neal wrote that **Hutka** struggles in his job and wonders if the best person is doing the job. "We need to discuss his future," Neal said. "But I don't know if the votes are there to (fire him)." Councilman Jim Fisher was at the other end of the spectrum in his review of **Hutka's** work. "The city manager we have is one of the most honest and honorable men I've come across in my mind," he said. Among Neal's complaints are not being kept informed of city business and e-mail being used as a means of communication from **Hutka** to council members. Under Port Huron's form of city government, the mayor is a largely ceremonial position, and the daily administrative power is concentrated in the hands of the city manager - who is hired by the council.

Communication is a hot topic lately because of the trouble plaguing the county government a few blocks from the Municipal Office Center. The county is embroiled with budget overruns for its new jail and accusations ex-county Administrator Troy Feltman did not inform commissioners about major cost changes with the project. "I'm hearing about things on the street before I'm notified," Neal said. "I just don't want to be part of the same predicament (as the county)." **Hutka** said his form of communication is dictated by the importance of the topic; phone calls and face-to-face discussions are used for bigger issues and e-mail for informational-type items.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Lifelong Port Huron resident Marty Marshall was surprised the job review again was divided. "I think he's doing a good job," he said. "It seems like the city is going in a good direction." Marshall said the city's work to find more activities for people and rehabilitating neighborhoods - both **Hutka** priorities - must continue. Some on the council agree. Steinborn doesn't agree with Neal's assessment **Hutka** isn't performing well. "I don't get the impression he's struggling," Steinborn said. "He inherited a strong staff that's allowed him to address bigger things the council has put on their agenda, like blight."

**WHAT THEY SAID CITY MANAGER'S EVALUATION**

Port Huron City Council members rated City Manager **Tom Hutka** in seven areas. Here's a sampling of what they said:

**ALAN CUTCHER:** "**Tom** has continued to be an excellent city manager for Port Huron. He has embraced new ideas and opportunities through the year."

**JIM FISHER:** "I have always been pleased with **Tom's** communications with council. His personal integrity ensures his following both the spirit and letter of the city charter."

**DAVID HAYNES:** "The manager has demonstrated good leadership in his involvement and staffs regarding participating in attracting new investment."

**SALLY JACOBS:** "I am very concerned that after four years many of my original complaints and concerns regarding **Tom's** performance have not been addressed."

**MARK NEAL:** "In my opinion, Mr. **Hutka** is struggling as city manager. He has lost some respect in the community."

**KIM PRAX:** "I feel that **Tom** continues to do an exceptional job in the area of revenues. (But) I have a few areas of great concern. While I have always considered my communication with **Tom** to be exceptional, several recent events have led me to believe that the council is not informed of issues in a timely manner."

**MARK STEINBORN:** "In my opinion, the manager is at least satisfactory in every area. That is already enough to exceed expectations."

**A CLOSER LOOK**

**TOM HUTKA, 47**

**RESIDENCE:** Port Huron.

**OCCUPATION:** Port Huron city manager since May 2001.

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Princeton University in New Jersey; master's degree in public administration from Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

**FAMILY:** Wife, Ashley; and grown daughter, Stacey.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thomas J. Hutka**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Times Herald (MI)  
July 31, 2002

**Hutka Wants to Look Ahead**

Author: Amber Hunt

Some might say Port Huron City Manager **Tom Hutka** is stuck in a carnival game of Whack-a-Mole: As past divisiveness among City Council members rears its head, **Hutka** starts whacking away - to no avail. "Most (residents) are frustrated because it looks like the city's going back into conflict," **Hutka** said Tuesday. "I keep telling them we're still focused on the issues." **Hutka** last week wrote a two-page response to a 10-page evaluation that calls the manager "invaluable" and "anal." **Hutka** was hired in May 2001. His first annual review was compiled this month.

The review, a compilation of the seven council members' individual re-views, sparked debate among council members because some accused Mayor B. Mark Neal of encouraging them to write negative reviews of **Hutka**. The composite review is mixed, calling **Hutka** "the best city manager the city has had in years" on one page, then blasting him for being "almost anal about small, petty things" on another.

In his response, **Hutka** said his first 14 months were challenging. "The first year in any management position is always a challenge," he wrote, "but I think as a team, we worked very hard and got a lot accomplished." He disagreed with some of the council members' individual comments, which were anonymous. He wrote that none of the complaints were discussed with him prior to his review. "Furthermore, none of the serious concerns are accompanied with specific examples," he said.

**Hutka** listed his top priorities as revitalizing the city's neighborhoods, redeveloping the downtown and providing high-quality, low-cost services to residents. He said he'd prefer working on those "important fights" rather than battling "previous conflicts" that seem to be resurfacing.

Resident Loren Richardson, 47, said it seems **Hutka** is caught between trying to please the council and the city employees he oversees. "He doesn't get an 'A' from me, either," he said. "I just want to see some leadership from him." Richardson, who lost a 2001 bid for a council seat, said he'd prefer the city switch to the mayoral form of city government.

**Hutka** was hired after a nationwide search to replace former City Manager Larry Osborn, who was fired in a 4-3 council vote in September 2000.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Times Herald (MI)

July 23, 2002

**Port Huron Council's Manager Critiques Destroyed**

Author: Amber Hunt

If three of Port Huron's City Council members organized to write negative reviews of the city manager, residents - and the manager - may never know. Mayor B. Mark Neal said he destroyed the documents that either would prove or lay to rest the allegation. "I was just following what had been done previously," Neal said Monday. "That's just precedent." The Times Herald asked for copies of the seven council members' individual reviews after some members said Neal encouraged them to write negative evaluations of City Manager **Tom Hutka**.

Neal said he couldn't give the documents to the newspaper because they'd been destroyed. City Clerk Pauline Repp, who's been clerk since 1989, agreed Neal was following protocol. Original copies of former City Manager Larry Osborn's reviews also were destroyed by previous mayors, she said. "The thinking is that it isn't important who said what," she said. "It's meant to be an overall evaluation." Each council member was asked in June to fill out an evaluation of **Hutka**. The final review finished this month was a compilation of the individual reviews. The overall review included comments ranging from glowing to critical, with no indication of who said what.

Neal dictated the overall review to Repp. She saw the reviews to more easily transcribe large blocks of text, and said every comment in the individual reviews was included in the 10-page overall review. Neal said after the final review was compiled, he destroyed the seven individual reviews. "What's the purpose of having them?" he asked. "This way, (**Hutka**) doesn't know who's making the comments, so council members can feel comfortable saying things frankly." Council members Kim Prax and Cliff Schrader last week said most council members were contacted by Neal and asked not to "sugarcoat" the evaluations.

An e-mail sent by Neal to Laurie Sample-Wynn and Jim Fisher refers to "grumblings in the community" about **Hutka**. "If you have heard some (grumblings) as well and you concur, please notate those concerns," Neal wrote. The mayor said he simply asked the council to be open and honest. He denied Schrader's suggestion the council's perceived minority - a 4-3 split in which Neal apparently is aligned with Sally Jacobs and Alan Cutcher - hopes to fire **Hutka** if the three gain an ally and control of the council in the next election.

Cutcher and Jacobs also denied the accusation. They said they wrote their reviews without input from Neal. "Actually, (**Hutka**) and I had gone out to lunch to discuss the evaluation after it was done," Jacobs said, adding the lunch lasted more than five hours. "I had some concerns in some areas. We discussed it, and I'm assuming he heard a lot of the comments and will work from there on them."

The overall evaluation rates **Hutka** a 3.8, or satisfactory to very good, on a scale from 0 to 5. In former city manager Osborn's 1998 review, he rated a 4.0, or very good. In 1999, the rating

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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dropped to a 3.7. He was fired the next year after an election caused a shift in the makeup of the council. Previous managers were reviewed informally during budget session. **Hutka** on Monday said he has never seen the council's individual reviews. "I don't know what protocol or procedure was used in the past," he said. "This is my first evaluation." Schrader, who's serving his fourth term, said he assumed the individual reviews were put in the city manager's personnel file. Neal acknowledged he doesn't know why the practice of destroying the documents was adopted in the first place. "Maybe it's something we need to review," he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Times Herald (MI)

July 20, 2002

**Schrader: Neal Faction Takes Steps to Oust City Manager**

Author: Amber Hunt

At least two Port Huron City Council members have accused Mayor B. Mark Neal of trying to sway the council into giving the city manager a negative employee evaluation. Manager **Tom Hutka** was hired in May 2001. His first review, a compilation of individual evaluations written by the seven council members, was finished this month. **Hutka's** overall evaluation was rated a 3.8, or satisfactory to very good, on a scale from 0 to 5.

While some portions declare **Hutka** "invaluable" and "the best city manager Port Huron has had," harsher criticisms come under the headings "management responsibilities" and "leadership." "The lack of communication with other governmental entities is a concern. The inability to convey to his staff what he wants done, plus the lack of finishing projects or ideas is very evident," the review reads. The review consists of snippets of comments from council members, though it doesn't note which member said what.

Councilman Cliff Schrader, who is serving his fourth two-year term, said past managers have scored much higher than **Hutka**. He believes Neal tried to manipulate the evaluation by contacting council members and warning them not to "sugarcoat" the reviews. "He lobbied everyone except me to do a derogatory evaluation," Schrader said. "Mr. **Hutka's** evaluation, to be quite honest with you, was terrible for a CEO." **Hutka**, reached on vacation Friday, acknowledged the review was mixed. He said he's "not sure what happened behind the scenes" between Neal and the rest of the council. "I'm pleased most of the council members see I'm doing a good job for the city," he said. Neal did not return phone calls seeking comment Friday.

Councilwoman Sally Jacobs, who is considered by some to be in the minority of a 4-3 council divide along with Neal and Councilman Alan Cutcher, said Schrader's accusations are off-base. Neal called her about the review, she said, but only to help her out with what would be her first evaluation of a city manager. "He told me just to be honest about your thoughts and feelings and put them down," she said. Schrader said Neal, Cutcher and Jacobs are paving the way to fire **Hutka** if they gain control of the split council in the next election. Jacobs said that's absurd. "I don't enjoy firing anybody. I don't know if the city could go through something like that again," she said.

City Manager Larry Osborn was fired by a 4-3 vote in September 2000. Councilwoman Kim Prax said she, too, was called by Neal. "I thought it was a strange conversation. It was negative," she said. Neal also sent an e-mail to council members Laurie Sample-Wynn and Jim Fisher asking them to "answer each question sincerely and honestly. "There is a tendency to sugar-coat evaluations, so take your time. I have heard rumblings in the community of some concerns," he wrote. "If you have heard some as well and you concur, please notate those concerns." **Hutka** previously was assistant county manager for Osceola County, Fla.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Grand Rapids Press (MI)

August 4, 2001

**Restaurateur Aims to Get Dice Rolling****Tribes Usually Initiate Development of a Gambling Hall. This Time, a Potential Operator Wins Over Port Huron and Woos the Prospective Owners.**

Author: Garrison Wells

Better known for his Mr. Fabulous burgers, local businessman Don Reynolds is putting his money on becoming a Port Huron casino kingpin. The owner of the now-closed Mr. Fables burger chain and the Lakos restaurant in Grand Rapids -- who wants to attach a casino to his Thomas Edison Inn in Port Huron -- has laid out a \$50,000 bet that he can lure an Indian casino to the town of 33,000. So far, the dice are breaking in his favor. In an advisory election he bankrolled in June, Port Huron residents voted 54 percent in favor of his proposal. Talks now are under way with the Bay Mills Indian Community of Brimley, the tribe Reynolds wants to own and operate the proposed 120,000-square-foot casino. The casino would be hooked to his hotel by a walkway.

The tribe already owns the Bay Mills Resort and Casino and Kings Club Casino in Brimley, near Sault Ste. Marie in the Upper Peninsula. Tribal officials didn't return phone calls. The June vote was non-binding, but gives city officials a read on the electorate's opinion. Proponents said the casino is expected to be an economic windfall for Port Huron and has the backing of city officials. Supporters project the casino will bring in \$100 million a year, with \$5 million to be earmarked for city government and \$3 million for local charities. The casino is expected to provide 1,000 jobs with a \$30 million payroll, generate \$2.5 million in sales of goods and services, and boost tourism, a critical component of the area's economy. "We've worked hard on this," Reynolds said. "We're negotiating right now with the Bay Mills tribe and haven't arrived at anything yet." He declined further comment because of the continuing talks.

But critics are concerned that his tack on getting an Indian casino sets a dangerous precedent. Most Indian casinos have opened in Michigan after a tribe wins federal recognition, then obtains a compact with the state. Tribes then hire consultants or a management firm to operate the casino. Reynold's method has turned the procedure on its head. "It's a bad precedent in this state that now has 17 Indian casinos, whereby businesses can decide that they want to develop an Indian casino, and then set about to profit by finding a tribe that will help them get into the casino business," said casino opponent William McMaster of Birmingham, who is head of Taxpayers United. McMaster also questioned corporate funding for an election.

Port Huron city officials, however, defended the election. "He wanted the casino, so he paid for the election. It's was just logical," city manager **Thomas Hutka** said. The casino, to be built with the same decor as the hotel, would be called the Thomas Edison Casino. For Reynolds, at least part of the payoff would come from filling his hotel, banquet and conference rooms and restaurant. Two floors of the three-story casino would consist of gaming. The third floor is planned as an Indian museum. Still, winning the election only begins what could be a long

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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process. Even if the Bay Mills tribe likes the idea, getting federal recognition can take time.. And Gov. John Engler has repeatedly said he will not negotiate any further compacts unless he is asked the Legislature. That puts the Bay Mills tribe in the same position as the Dorr-based Gun Lake Band of Pottawatomi, which wants to build a casino south of Grand Rapids, but has to get a compact with the state before it can move forward.

The difference, however, is that the Thomas Edison casino has the open support of Port Huron officials. "The project has the potential of not only providing direct cash benefits, but of increasing the number of tourists that come to the city," **Hutka** said. "There are great possibilities for spinoff tourism and trade from the casino." The city, he added, "is prepared to help with the development any way we can." **Hutka** added that money crossing the St. Clair River to the Point Edward Charity Casino in Sarnia, Ontario, would be more likely to stay in Port Huron.

To downtown Port Huron business owner Kathy Noetzel, however, it's too early to start celebrating a casino windfall. Some reports, she said, indicate that casino visitors don't spend money outside the gambling hall, while other suggest they spend freely. "You can take it or leave it as far as I'm concerned," she said. "If it comes to town, though, I hope it is successful."



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
January 28, 2001

**Osceola County Central Florida County Commission Change  
Top Jobs Change in office Shuffle**

Author: April Hunt

Two of Osceola County's three assistant managers will oversee major divisions of restructured government offices. The third, Larry Lenz, will drop down to office director of information services. Lenz will take a pay cut; exact numbers were not released. John Ford, who will become division director of administrative services, and **Tom Hutka**, who will oversee the public-works division, will have no change in their salary. "Change is not an easy process," said county spokeswoman Twis Hoang, noting that Lenz had requested his new post and has extensive experience in the field. Those moves, and several others, will be formally unveiled at the County Commission meeting Monday, scheduled to start at 1:30 p.m.

County Manager Bob Fernandez is restructuring the office hierarchy in an effort to make government more efficient and more responsive to residents. Commissioners have given him unanimous support in the move. The largest change -- eliminating the three assistant positions and creating an office of deputy manager -- is half-done. More than 35 people applied for the deputy position, none of whom now work for the county. The county has not held any interviews on the job, and it will remain open as the shuffling begins.

Another surprise in the restructuring is a decision by Tim Hemphill, executive director of the convention and visitors bureau, to turn down the newly created division director overseeing community services. That job will remain open, as will another division, overseeing public safety. The fifth division job, head of the growth/management department, will go to Mike Kloehn. He already handles that work as planning director and will receive no pay increase with the new title. Also open is the division director for financial services. Current employees have expressed interest in the job, and the county is also accepting outside resumes. A utilities-office head will be kept open indefinitely, as the county slowly reviews whether it wants to add that to the services it already provides, such as trash pickup.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
December 6, 2000

**Osceola County Central Florida Neighborhood Controversy  
BVL Struggles to Find Voice  
Buenaventura Lakes Has a Backlog of Unanswered Complaints, and Residents Have  
Become Apathetic**

Author: Pamela Mercer

Nine months ago, the Buenaventura Lakes Community Association seemed doomed. Its president, Tony Costanzo, had resigned after complaining that he was unable to work in an environment of apathetic residents, declining membership and unresponsiveness by the Osceola County government. Then, under a cloud of controversy stemming from disputes about election procedures, a new leadership took over. Beulah Farquharson and Cruz Castillo, two community activists, became president and vice president of the association with a promise to transform the group into an effective voice for the people. Today, the association remains a small and struggling group that finds itself revisiting issues that have plagued the community for years but remain unresolved. Apathy runs high, and despite efforts to publicize its events, many there do not even know the group exists.

Although Farquharson and Castillo have worked to increase the group's membership, the number of people present at the association's most recent monthly meeting did not surpass the usual 12 or 13, according to those present. Because an insufficient number of the five-member board of directors was present, there was not a quorum to make any decisions, Castillo said. Since February, Castillo and Farquharson indicate, the group and the county are no closer than they were when Costanzo left. The unincorporated community of more than 20,000 residents still has no government of its own. Neither does it have a high-ranking county representative to tend to its needs. For many, that person used to be Bob De Gori, the former Buenaventura Lakes director whose duties included listening to concerns and complaints by residents and reporting them to the county's management.

After De Gori's resignation last year, the county opted to eliminate the position and instead hire Maria Alvarez as community coordinator. Earlier this year, Alvarez was dismissed and replaced by Lizette Pagan. Pagan's former duties were taken up by others in the county's parks and recreation department. To some in BVL, this served as the latest indication that the county was leaving its largest voting block at the mercy of mid-level officials. "We have no direct person to deal with our problems with the county commissioners," said Alfred J. Switzer, a retiree who has lived in BVL for 19 years. "If we have someone who is employed by the county whose job it is to take our problems to them, he's speaking for 28,000 people."

**Thomas Hutka**, the assistant county manager, said the county decided to change the way BVL's concerns were dealt with by giving residents direct access to each county office rather than have their concerns centralized through one person. "When Bob De Gori left his position we were able to actually enhance the service that we have at BVL by dividing up his responsibilities and

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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having those responsibilities shared among several people who are with the parks department," said Osceola County spokeswoman Twis Hoang. Farquharson has been one of the most outspoken opponents of the new system, saying that it has made the county less effective in handling residents' concerns. "I get voice mail 24/7 with complaints about BVL such as zoning complaints and complaints that happen in people's neighborhoods," she said. "I call the county, same old joke, and nothing gets done."

Farquharson said she had recorded many of the complaints in a log book and had designed a complaint form for residents to fill out. She declined a request to review those records saying she feared that the county would dispute them. Switzer remembers how it used to be when he arrived in 1981. In terms of services, he said, "we're worse off now." County officials have defended this approach and argued that some residents in BVL may have overestimated De Gori's powers by characterizing him as a go-between for the government and the people.

Yet according to the county's own personnel records, De Gori's job description included acting as "a liaison between the residents of BVL . . . and the county manager's office." At \$51,095, De Gori's salary was more than \$20,000 higher than that of Alvarez or that of Pagan. Paul Owen, a recently elected county commissioner whose district includes BVL, said he plans to address long-standing problems facing BVL and other communities in his district. He met with residents from his district this week. County code enforcement officials say they get more complaints from BVL than anywhere else, usually answering between six and 10 telephone calls a day. But officials said they had no written records of the calls.

Walter Krujaick, the county's chief code enforcement officer said statutory provisions limit his power to enforce the codes. "People have rights, and I can't violate people's rights," he added. "There's a due process by law that's granted to the people." For some in BVL, however, such explanations echo comments they've heard for years. "BVL should be separate or should be part of Kissimmee," said William Franz, one of the residents who attended the community association's meeting and plans to join the group. "But not one or the other. Right now we have no representation."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
November 11, 2000

**Central Florida Osceola County Neighborhood Talk****Poinciana Envisions Future****About 300 People Met to Share Their Hopes and Fears and of What Their Community Will be Like in 20 Years**

Author: Pamela Mercer

Think of this community 20 years from now. What do you see? One group of Poinciana residents pondered the question Thursday night during a meeting that drew about 300 members of the nation's second largest master-planned community in the first attempt to devise a roadmap for the future. What they saw were trees, wide spaces and pedestrian-friendly roads.

They saw "the beautiful Florida sun smiling down on a peaceful, quiet community with plenty of vegetation," **Tom Hutka**, an assistant county manager of Osceola County, told the gathering. "The quality of the community is surrounded by trees and recreational facilities."

Others had a dramatically different view. As she held up a sketch on a large piece of paper that she and others used to present their vision, Barbara Erskine, who lives on Darlington Street, spoke of a convention center, a hotel, car dealerships and an auto-repair shop. "We see Poinciana growing and growing," she told the group. And then there were those who envisioned this community of 20,000 suffering through the growing pains of many large, dense suburban areas. Their drawings satirized what could happen.

Mickey Siegel, 72, of Hunter Circle, showed a woman flying from her house to Poinciana's very own Wal-Mart Supercenter with a Buck Rogers back pack. Penny Grace had her own tongue-in-cheek version of sprawl, depicting a busy, urbanized Poinciana "with Big Brother watching, police with traffic lights. I see youth not motivated. I see a YMCA there; there's adults in there, not youth. On one corner of the drawing, she depicted a "fat cat." These visions were shared during a session sponsored by the Kissimmee/Osceola County Chamber of Commerce's Poinciana Area Council at Deerwood Elementary School.

The gathering was led by facilitators from Community Vision, a group with a mission to make Osceola a better place to live. What emerged were almost as many visions as there were ethnic groups and ages gathered in the school's cafeteria. Poinciana, an area of more than 20,000 residents that has the potential to grow to 250,000, has grown slowly through the years. It is changing from an isolated haven of peace and quiet to a suburb whose increasingly younger and more active population is demanding the services of a city in a country setting.

This paradox came to light when facilitators asked groups of residents to write down a list of Poinciana's strengths, challenges and opportunities. What emerged was a group torn by its desire for peace and quiet and the need for amenities that might threaten such a way of life. Many agreed that Poinciana's sense of community, its diversity and its peacefulness were the traits that lured them there in the first place. Yet they expressed a desire for more gas stations, large

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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department stores and easy access to Interstate 4. The three-hour session was the first of its kind in Poinciana -- a chance for hundreds of residents to make suggestions for improving life and looking for ways to bring about those changes by themselves. Armed with these suggestions, the residents will break up into committees and address issues separately. Then, under the guidance of Community Vision, they will go about making their dreams come true. Some decisions involve spending millions of dollars. Others may warrant intervention by the county and the consent of the developer. "We will help them focus, but it's up to the people of Poinciana to make this happen," said Mike Horner, the president of the Chamber of Commerce. "Because not everything is free."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)

April 7, 2000

**The County is Looking for a Replacement – and Considering Nontraditional Candidates – for Manager Rob Magnaghi**

Author: Tyler Gray

Osceola County Commissioners talked this week about how and when they would seek interim and full-time replacements for Osceola County Manager Rob Magnaghi.

Magnaghi resigned, effective May 2, but he reiterated this week his willingness to help continue several large projects, including a new courthouse campus, an agricultural center and a county convention center. "Some of them are 20- or 25-year decisions for this county," Magnaghi said. Meanwhile, commissioners will look for a professional with an education in public administration or comparable experience to replace Magnaghi, who made \$100,800 a year. Some said they wanted to be free to pick from business people without government experience or assistant county managers already in Osceola. "I don't want this board to be trapped into only hiring people or to be reviewing people who have only been in city or county government," Commission Chairman Ken Smith said.

Assistant County Manager **Tom Hutka** was mentioned as a potential replacement, as were former Sprint executive and Economic Development Commission of Mid-Florida president Darrell Kelley and former Volusia County managers Tom Kelly and Larry Arrington. Arrington is not related to Osceola County Commissioner Mary Jane Arrington. "In the interim, it would be best if we tried to find someone from the outside to come in," Mary Jane Arrington said. Assistant county managers would then be free to pursue the permanent manager post without appearing to have an unfair advantage because of the interim-manager position, she said. She also recommended speaking with Leigh Root, assistant executive director for the Florida Counties Foundation. Root said she does not keep resumes but is able to help link up managers who are between jobs with counties who need interim administrators. The commission approved an advertisement for local and national publications. The target date for interviews is June 15. Finding an interim replacement will be the first priority, commissioners said. "I think we need to be thinking quickly in terms of getting someone to fill in," Smith said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
January 30, 2000

**Column: Osceola 2000 Forecast****A Look Ahead****Buenaventura Lakes Takes New Direction**

Author: Pamela Mercer

The new community coordinator for Buenaventura Lakes has to change people's opinions and overcome community apathy. Maria Alvarez, a social worker from Puerto Rico, vows to bring together children and families and said she would organize sports and social gatherings aimed at building unity within this culturally diverse community. "I'm committed to providing good services for the community," she said. "I'll be here for you, and I'll be hearing what you say." Her arrival signals a ray of hope to many here that the county may be making a commitment to its largest voting bloc. More than 20,000 people live in Buenaventura Lakes. "The county has never really taken BVL into consideration," said the Rev. Vidal Martinez, the pastor at St. Catherine's of Sienna Church, whose congregation includes many Hispanics. "[Alvarez] should be instrumental in seeing how we can work together."

During a recent BVL Community Association meeting, Tony Constanza, the group's president, told a small gathering of residents that he hoped Alvarez's presence would reawaken their interest in the community. Alvarez, 42, has a master's degree in social work from the Interamerican University in Puerto Rico. Previously, she worked at the Department of Children & Families and the Education Department in Puerto Rico. She moved to the Lakeside area 31/2 years ago and was appointed to her current post last month. She will earn about \$30,000 a year. Many say that as the community's main organizer, she faces an uphill battle to muster participation. County officials say their lack of support for recreational activities in BVL was partly because the county was engaged in financing and maintaining buildings and facilities.

**Tom Hutka**, an assistant county manager, said the decision to create Alvarez's position was part of a restructuring effort involving areas of the county bureaucracy that oversees BVL. In other changes, the county has transferred functions such as the maintenance of parks and facilities back to its own corresponding departments. "We want to turn the community center in BVL into a place where we can have our own events," **Hutka** said. "We want to be the instigators and implementers" of events. Most of BVL's upkeep is paid for by revenue from its Municipal Service Benefit Unit fees, a type of fixed tax charged to each BVL house for maintenance projects in the community. It is roughly equivalent to the assessment fees paid by Poinciana residents. A BVL homeowner currently pays \$37.65 per year. Overall, the county raises about \$300,000 annually from the fees, **Hutka** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)

January 26, 2000

**Garbage Landfill Cost Controversy****Trash is Creating a Costly Dilemma****If a Cheaper Replacement for the Southport Landfill Can't be Found, Trash Pickup Fees are Bound to Go Up**

Author: Tyler Gray

By 2007, money stored away for covering trash pickup and disposal in Osceola County will run out, leaders predicted this week. Without a trash fee increase or a money-saving alternative to the Southport Landfill, the cost of trash disposal will jump with inflation and population. The cost will lead to more than a million-dollar shortfall in the budget, leaders said. The good news is that the rates are safe for seven years. "If we find a replacement to Southport that's more cost-effective," said assistant county manager **Tom Hutka**, "we can go for many more years without touching rates." Without a more efficient way to get rid of the garbage county residents bring to the curb twice a week, commissioners will have to consider raising rates in the universal waste program, which started last October and serves most residents. "It's the position we're in," **Hutka** said. "We have to pay the bills."

The pressure is on. By court order, Southport must close by 2005. It is likely to fill up before then, said solid waste director Lenny Marion. The county needs an alternative - something to stretch the \$11.50 trash fee paid by almost every household. Finding the alternative will be a tricky task under a tight time line. Officials are about to open the floodgates. They'll invite companies to pitch trash incinerators, landfills and contract agreements with existing operations. Trash could be shipped to Okeechobee, Lake or Brevard counties. It could be burned or buried within the county limits. Leaders agreed this week to negotiate with the intent of making a decision by summer. Residents will live with their decision for decades.

Commissioners at a special meeting Monday said they wanted to nail down exactly what they wanted before asking companies to negotiate. "Prior planning up front will save you a lot in the rear end of this thing," said Commissioner Ken Shipley. Commissioner Mary Jane Arrington told purchasing manager Rey Palma that his time line for selecting a partner to built a landfill, an incinerator or another type of facility was a bit too ambitious. Palma had suggested soliciting trash company negotiations as early as Feb. 8. "I think you need to give yourself a little more time," Arrington said. She also said she would support a transfer station, regardless of the method of disposal the county chooses. Other commissioners questioned the need for a transfer station if the commission decides to dispose of trash within county limits, but all agreed to study the issue. A transfer station would cost about \$5 million, officials have said. Monday's meeting ended with a solution in motion. Commissioners suggested assembling a negotiating committee that would focus on choosing a trash company for Osceola's future. Palma agreed to return with a lengthier time line. "There are a lot of dollars here," Marion said, "and we need to make sure we make the right choice."



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)

June 27, 1999

**Officials will Give Trash Plant Sniff Test**

**A High-Tech Incinerator, Along with Several Other Options, is Being Considered to Replace a Landfill That will Close Soon**

Author: Chris Cobbs

Osceola officials are flying to Minnesota, not to see snow melt, but to watch trash burn. They will study the operation of a high-tech incinerator to see if it makes sense to build a similar plant here. The Alexandria, Minn., facility also must pass an important sensory test. "As we drive up, we'll roll down our windows and see how it smells," said Assistant County Manager **Tom Hutka**. "We want to make sure it's a good neighbor for people living near it." If the nose says "no," then **Hutka**, Solid Waste Director Lenny Marion and other members of the party likely will return home with a negative recommendation. Until then, a similar trash-burning facility is one of several options being considered by local officials.

The County Commission said it wants to have a long-range plan for Osceola's solid-waste disposal by the end of 1999. That's because the county's Southport landfill may close as soon as 2003. As the county presses forward with plans for universal track pickup, a plan where all county residents will pay an equal fee to have trash and recycling material picked up curbside, it must decide what to do with the trash it collects. It could go to a transfer station, a sort of central holding area. Then it would be trucked to a permanent disposal site. It will be up to commissioners to decide the most economical long-term site for dumping, Marion said. One possibility is a huge landfill in Okeechobee County. Another is a proposed landfill near Holopaw.

If neither alternative works out, the board could send the trash to another site in Florida or possibly South Georgia. Still another alternative: Osceola's trash could be dumped in a new incinerator and sent up in smoke. That's where the trip to Minnesota fits into the planning picture. Unlike an incinerator in nearby Lake County, the Minnesota plant uses new technology, with no moving parts in areas where trash is burned, officials said. It's cheaper to build and operate than older-style facilities, officials said. "We can be economically competitive to a landfill, with fewer emissions and less groundwater contamination," said Ron Barmore, an official with the group that owns the Minnesota plant and proposes to build one here. The cost of the facility would be between \$32 million and \$35 million, he said. It would take six months to develop plans, a year for permitting and another 18 months to build.

Tipping fees likely would be in the range of \$42 to \$49, which is higher than the county wants, **Hutka** said. Current tipping fees at Southport are \$38, and the county hopes that even with inflation and the cost of building a new disposal plant, the cost won't rise past the low \$40 range, **Hutka** said. To get rid of trash via the Lake County incinerator would cost at least \$52 per ton, while it could be taken to a landfill at Okeechobee for about \$40 per ton, **Hutka** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The permitting process for the new, no-moving-parts technology could be lengthy because of concerns about air quality, Marion said. "You would be the new kids on the block," he told the County Commission. "This would be new technology in Florida." The county also needs to determine if it would need to build and operate a transfer station if it decides to use the incinerator option for disposal. A transfer station, which would cost about \$5 million, would serve as a collecting point. Trucks would haul trash to the centrally located transfer station, where a group of larger trucks would take it to its final destination.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
January 24, 1999

**Courts to Stand for Past, Future**

Author: Chris Cobbs

The best of past and present will help make up the new county courthouse complex. The creaky hardwood floors, tall windows and high ceilings of the third-floor courtroom at the Osceola County Courthouse are stately reminders of the 19th century. The new \$40.3 million courthouse that will soon begin to rise nearby will pay homage to the past, but also will feature modern touches, such as technology allowing witnesses to give testimony from across the country through videoconferencing. On the outside, the new building will look a lot like the old one, with the same red brick and a bell tower topped by a cupola. But the similarities end with the exterior touches, because the new courthouse will be designed with the aid of computers, every square inch catering to the needs of a fast-growing county. The new building will be home to, among others, court administration, judges, clerk of court and public defender employees.

Construction of the new complex is beginning, along with an expanded parking area. If there are no glitches, the building will open late in 2000, officials said. "We will have 12 courtrooms when we open and space for three more," said David Peach, capital projects manager for the county and construction manager for the courthouse. "Ultimately we could have 24 courtrooms in use by the year 2017. And we are trying to make it all as user-friendly as we can, taking into consideration the likes and dislikes of the people who will use it." The courthouse complex will include a six-story central office structure with a three-story wing on the west side.

In the future, a three-story wing could be built on the east, allowing for growth and adding symmetry to the building, Assistant County Manager **Tom Hutka** said. About 15,000 square feet - the equivalent of a couple of good-sized mansions - will be unfinished space, Peach said. The vacant space can be used for future offices or courtrooms. No estimate of the cost of finishing the empty space was available. "It is more cost-efficient to provide unfinished building space than to come back and put new additions on a building," **Hutka** said. "We are planning the building so courtrooms can be adjacent and other agencies will have space on the same floors. We will also have the unfinished space allowing for efficient expansion."

County Commissioner Mary Jane Arrington, who has been meeting regularly with judges, architects and others to plan the building, said the final proposals specified about 40,000 square feet more than discussed. "We realized we needed a little more space than we had been talking about," she said. "The larger building we have come up with gives us a comfort level for another decade. I think we will be in good shape through the year 2007." The courthouse project also takes in new parking, renovation of the administration building and restoration of the old courthouse. The county also is fixing up office space nearby at the site of the old Beaumont School.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)

June 28, 1997

**Osceola Suspends Officials for Inappropriate Activities**

Dateline: Kissimmee

Two zoning inspectors in the Osceola County zoning and code enforcement office were disciplined this week for inappropriate activities during work hours. Don Stewart was suspended without pay pending termination after being cited several times in the past year for leaving his work area without permission, insubordination and deficiencies in performance.

Norman Fout was suspended for five days and placed on special probation for misuse of county time, inefficiency and insubordination. Fout was accused of making "frequent unauthorized visits to your home, to restaurants, shops or stores," according to records.

"We are working hard to ensure that all county employees are putting in a full day's work and earning their pay," said **Tom Hutka**, assistant county manager.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Plain Dealer (OH)

August 23, 1995

**Council to Try to Determine Who Authorized Overruns**

Author: Robert J. Vickers

City Council hopes to find out who authorized \$2 million in cost overruns on the repaving of Prospect Ave. and to approve a lakefront maintenance cost-sharing plan when it meets today for its last monthly summer meeting. "It's fairly routine," Council President Jay Westbrook said of the daylong, meeting-of-the-whole session. "We try to keep the two summer sessions to the basics." On the table before regular meetings resume Sept. 11 will be further inquiries into who in Mayor Michael R. White's administration approved overruns for the street repaving and replacement of curbs and sidewalks on Prospect Ave. "Our big question all along has been, 'How did they occur and who authorized the overruns?'" Westbrook said. "If we can get an answer to that, we can move to settle the bill and get the contractors paid."

Rick Werner, executive assistant to the mayor, said the administration has told the council that former commissioner for engineering and construction **Tom Hutka** authorized the overruns and that the administration is eager to pay its outstanding bills. As a result of the overruns, the council passed legislation forcing the administration to report all city projects to the council that go over budget by 5 percent or more. A related project that Westbrook said the council will discuss with the administration is the Humphries Park and Service Center in Collinwood. Construction on the project has not begun, although it was approved as part of a 1994 bond issue. "We authorized Prospect and Humphries," Westbrook said. "In Prospect we get the work and the overruns and the other one we get no work at all. We want to know why there can be authorized overruns in one and no work begun in the other."

Council also will push to pass legislation so that the cost of upkeep and maintenance of public areas around lakefront enterprises - such as the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum and the Great Lakes Science Museum - is shared with the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority. "It's really a way to cushion the cost to the city and create more participation by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the science museum and the Mather Maritime Museum," Westbrook said. "We want to see it in place before the opening of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame." The rock hall opens Labor Day weekend. The council is expected to approve legislation authorizing the administration to apply for and accept grants from the Regional CBTransit Authority and the Public Square Preservation and Maintenance Committee for the rehabilitation of Public Square. Westbrook said the council will probably hold off until September to take a closer look at what several council members believe are shortcomings in the Cleveland Public Power system. Last week's heat wave caused neighborhood wide power failures and led to White declaring a four-day heat emergency. "We're going to deal with that in much greater detail when we resume the regular session in September," he said. The council is also interested in learning what the reallocation of city services during the heat emergency cost, Westbrook said. "We've made an inquiry on that, and I don't think there's been an accounting on that," he said. "It's a question we've raised, but we won't expect it answered by Wednesday."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Plain Dealer, The (OH)

August 22, 1994

**On Certain City Byways, Residents Do Own the Road ‘It’s A Lot of Hard Work, But You Get to Know Your Neighbors ... and People Watch Out for Each Other’**

Author: Anjetta McQueen

From Lake Shore Blvd., four streets run to a small, grassy hill that slopes down into Lake Erie. They spread no wider than single cars. These streets, nestled in the northern edge of the city's Collinwood neighborhood, are framed by neat, cottagelike houses with children playing and adults strolling out front. At one of them, Meg Mills watches her husband, Nigel, shovel dirt onto stones that are the foundation of his street's new sidewalk. This is the price the Mills and about 80 households pay for streets that are considered theirs. "It's a lot of hard work," said Meg Mills, who grew up on Dalwood Dr. and now lives in the house on that street her grandfather owned. "But you get to know your neighbors really well, and people watch out for each other. It's like having a block group set up automatically." Dalwood, Bonniewood, Groveland Club and Overlook Park drives are designated as private - non-dedicated, the city calls them - which gives residents limited city services and greater power. The residents, paying the same tax rate as everyone else, get fire, police and trash services, but they must maintain their own streets, footing the bills for streetlights, paving and snow removal, among other things. But no one is allowed on the streets unless invited. And these streets boast one of the best lakefront views in Cleveland.

Some of the signs bolted on the trees and telephone poles at the street entrances off Lakeshore Blvd. make the point abundantly clear: "No Trespassing" warns one sign with red letters. "Private Drive" says another. The word "private" even appears under Dalwood's black and white street sign. And on Groveland Club, four signs are tacked to one tree. "It's not like there are armed sentries," said Councilman Michael Polensek, whose Ward 11 includes the private drives. "They're the ones who keep the grass cut, the trash cleared. They are the ones who pay the liability insurance. Because of that, they are entitled to a say in who comes in. "We're not talking about something that was put up yesterday," adds Polensek, who over the years has helped residents with minor trespassing issues such as teen-agers wanting to party by the lake.

The enclave goes back to the 19th century, when Collinwood was a separate village. Some of the streets in that village, which was annexed by Cleveland in 1910, were never built to conform with Cleveland city codes, so they remained undedicated. The area is predominantly white, with a few black families. The modest houses tend to be passed from one family to the next. At least one home has gone through five generations. Many of the deeds date to the 1920s and stipulate membership in clubs that operate much like a cross between a city block club and a condominium homeowners association.

**Tom Hutka**, engineering and construction commissioner in the city's Public Service Department, said streets such as the four in Collinwood are "fairly unusual." The department also has records of some public streets it has vacated, or relinquished, to private ownership. But for

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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the most part, the city doesn't have a complete count of private streets, he said. **Hutka** said he wouldn't even hazard a guess as to how many private streets are out there. Most of the private streets the department is aware of are little more than private driveways in housing subdivisions.

"Sometimes people come to us and say, 'We want you to take the street over.' But that depends on whether it was built to city standards or whether it serves the public interest. That's decided on a case-by-case basis," **Hutka** said. "In many cases, the streets were not built to city standards. The city does not accept a street just because somebody wants to donate it."

Meg Mills said there had been talk over the years of asking the city to take Dalwood and its neighboring streets back, particularly from older and lower-income residents who found street maintenance too costly. But there is less talk about it these days, she said. Polensek said that such an action, which must be approved by the City Council, would be highly unlikely, because the short, narrow streets do not meet city construction codes. "You would have to tear down half the houses," Polensek said. "We all know that's not going to happen."

Christine Story likes her street just the way it is. For the former Glenville neighborhood resident, this private swatch has given her something she's always wanted: a safe and close-knit Cleveland neighborhood. "This is it," said Story, 37, who moved onto Bonniewood with her husband, Carlton, and five children nine years ago. "It was the easiest move I've ever had. I grew up here, so I have had the opportunity to live all over Cleveland. Here, people come to the door and offer you cookies. You can go down the street and people will wave. "Some might ask you what you are doing there," she said. "Even so, they would wave at you first. How many places can you go in the city and see that?" Story, like Meg Mills, doesn't want anyone to think she's a snob on a country estate. In fact, she says, she and her neighbors recognize the greater need of a community that has been historically torn by racial and economic divisions.

That is the feeling behind their work in the Collinwood H.O.P.E. (Help Our Playground Exist) project, a plan to build a playground in nearby Euclid Beach Lakefront State Park. Mills said the playground project is important for more than just the children: "This is good for some of the new people. We're trying to get them involved, give them a little ownership in the neighborhood. "This area's been on the edge," Mills said. "We're fighting crack dealers, fighting litter. ... We might not be able to change things south of the boulevard. But we can spend four hours a Saturday hammering a nail, and that might help somebody find something inside themselves."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Plain Dealer (OH)

August 24, 1992

**Money Poured into City Streets**

Author: Pauline Thoma

Cleveland officials are spreading nearly \$76 million over the city's deteriorated streets and bridges. Having scooped up available dollars from every imaginable source, Service Director William M. Denihan is scrambling to transform that cash into concrete and steel. Denihan, who was hired by Mayor Michael R. White in November 1990, and his staff, which now includes the new commissioner of engineering and construction, **Thomas J. Hutka**, have developed an ambitious plan to repair the city's aging and crumbling infrastructure. They are concentrating this year on the transportation system in neighborhoods that for years have had little attention. To do that, they are using Cleveland's general obligation bonds and income taxes to attract far larger sums from county, state and federal sources, including Urban Development Action Grants and Housing and Urban Development grants.

That combination of money will pay for 39 projects, including improvements just completed, under construction or to be started before the end of 1992. The jobs include bridge replacements or renovations and street resurfacing from downtown to the industrial Flats and the far reaches of the city. The projects' costs total \$75.9 million. Of that amount, Cleveland is paying just \$14.2 million. Results of the endeavor already can be seen. One recently finished project is the new parking lot at the East Side Market, at E. 105th St. and St. Clair Ave., a job done with \$260,000 in federal grants and \$130,000 from the city. There was also the \$2 million resurfacing of West Blvd. completed with a combination of city bond issues and state Issue 2 funding, derived from voter-approved bond issues. Denihan said 154 Cleveland streets were resurfaced in 1991, and he hopes to complete another 160 before the year is over. But he deplores the red tape that prevents quick starts for many projects. "If we had to wait and go through the long process with the state and the feds on every project, people would be killing us because we're not getting things fixed," he said. "If it wasn't for help from Issue 2 and (Cuyahoga County Engineer) Tom Neff, we'd be in big trouble."

The projects, their locations, their total cost, Cleveland's contribution and their completion dates are:

1. PURITAS RD., reconstruction of hillside and roadway from Rocky River Valley to Grayton Rd.; \$1.8 million total; \$273,000 from Cleveland; completion November 1992.
2. W. 150th ST., resurfacing from Brookpark Rd. to Puritas Rd.; \$200,000 total; \$40,000 from Cleveland; October 1992.
3. W. 130th ST., replace Conrail bridge, lower and resurface the road beneath it, upgrade drainage; \$4.6 million; \$920,000; November 1993.
4. WARREN RD., rebuild from Lorain Ave. to Lakewood boundary line, \$1.6 million; \$510,000; September 1992.
5. WEST BLVD., rebuild from Jasper Ave. to Cliff Dr.; \$2 million; \$734,000; completed.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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6. W. 79th ST., demolish footbridge over RTA and railroad tracks and do not replace; \$190,000 from Cleveland only; October 1992.
7. W. 53d ST., rebuild bridge over Train Ave. and Conrail tracks; \$3.5 million; \$700,000; June 1993.
8. STORER AVE., rebuild between W. 65th St. and Fulton Rd.; \$1.7 million; \$425,000; December 1992.
9. FULTON RD., install safety netting on bridge over the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo until major renovation can be done; \$200,000 from Cleveland only; December 1992.
10. W. SCHAAF RD., resurface from Broadview Rd. to Brooklyn Heights boundary line; \$530,000; \$106,000; October 1992.
11. JENNINGS RD., reconstruct retaining wall on hill between Bern Ave. and Bradley Rd.; \$170,000 from Cleveland only; completed.
12. BRADLEY RD., from Jennings Rd. to Brooklyn Heights boundary line; \$500,000; \$250,000; December 1992.
13. W. 41st ST., resurface from Fulton Rd. to Lorain Ave.; \$1.3 million; \$260,000; November 1992.
14. W. 25th ST., rebuild bridge over RTA tracks; \$2.4 million; no cost to Cleveland; September 1993.
15. WASHINGTON AVE., rebuild bridge over abandoned Conrail tracks; \$520,000; \$174,000; completed.
16. CARTER RD., rebuild vertical lift bridge over the Cuyahoga River; \$14.8 million; \$2.9 million; November 1992.
17. EAGLE AVE., rehabilitate ramp and vertical lift bridge over the Cuyahoga River; \$6 million; \$1.2 million; October 1992.
18. ROCKWELL AVE., resurface from Public Square to E. 9th St.; \$83,000 from Cleveland only; completed.
19. E. 9th ST., resurface from Erieside Ave. to Broadway; \$1 million; \$256,000; December 1992.
20. CHESTER AVE., new sidewalks between E. 12th and E. 13th Sts.; \$75,000 from Cleveland only; completed.
21. JEFFERSON BRIDGE, rehabilitation over Norfolk & Western Railway tracks; \$220,000 from Cleveland only; May 1993.
22. INDEPENDENCE RD., reconstruct from Bading Rd. to Broadway; \$2.84 million; \$710,000; December 1992.
23. E. 71st ST., resurface from Grant Ave. to Broadway; \$670,000; \$134,000; November 1992.
24. UNION AVE., rebuild from Kinsman Rd. to Broadway; \$3.1 million; \$780,000; June 1993.
25. OUTHWAITE AVE., rebuild from E. 55th St. to E. 61st St.; \$120,000 from Cleveland only; completed.
26. E. 131st ST., resurface from Union Ave. to Garfield Heights boundary; \$730,000; \$146,000; September 1992.
27. MILES AVE., resurface from Broadway to Bedford boundary line; \$2.53 million; \$76,000; September 1992.
28. LEE RD., rebuild from Miles to Shaker Heights boundary line; \$1.26 million; \$182,000; June 1993.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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29. WADE PARK AVE., rebuild from E. 65th St. to E. 118th St.; \$2.4 million; \$863,400; completed.
  30. EAST SIDE MARKET, new parking lot; \$390,000; \$130,000; completed.
  31. LAKE SHORE BLVD., resurface through Cleveland between Bratenahl and Euclid boundary lines; \$800,000; \$24,000; November 1992.
  32. IVANHOE RD., resurface from St. Clair Ave. to Hillbrook Rd.; \$290,000; \$58,000; August 1992.
  33. E. 185th ST., from I-90 to Euclid General Hospital; \$580,000; \$116,000; August 1992.
  34. E. 55th ST., rebuild deck and replace beams of bridge over the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad tracks; \$840,000; \$168,000; December 1992.
  35. JENNINGS RD., erosion control at bridge over Big Creek; \$100,000; no cost to Cleveland; December 1992.
  36. KINSMAN RD., reconstruction of bridge over Norfolk & Western and RTA tracks; \$3.17 million; \$317,000; completed.
  37. LORAIN AVE., reconstruction of bridge over Norfolk & Western and RTA tracks; \$2.87 million; \$287,500; completed.
  38. E. 116th ST., reconstruction of bridge over RTA tracks; \$1.5 million; no cost to Cleveland; July 1993.
  39. EAST MEMORIAL SHOREWAY, reconstruction and safety upgrading from the east end of the Main Avenue Bridge to I-90 at the Inner Belt; \$8.16 million; \$333,000; July 1993.
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**Prepared by:** Amanda Dillabough and Cara Slade  
Colin Baenziger & Associates