



# Crystal K. Kinzel

Collier County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller  
3315 Tamiami Trail East, Suite 102  
Naples, Florida 34112-5324  
www.CollierClerk.com

## Letter to the Community...

Dear Citizens:

As we move toward the end of 2020 at a seemingly rapid pace, there is much to be thankful for this Thanksgiving.

I am thankful for the people we serve, and for the trust you have placed in me as your Clerk of Courts.

I am thankful for the deputy clerks who do their best everyday to serve you, even during these many months of the pandemic.

I am thankful that we live in the greatest country in the world, the best state in the country, and in the best county in the state. We are blessed with great winter weather and a beautiful community.

I am thankful for my family, friends and neighbors.

And finally, I am thankful that we are blessed with the freedom to celebrate and appreciate all that we have.

It's fitting that the Thanksgiving holiday occurs during the same month that we observe Veterans Day – the day that we thank and honor all veterans for protecting our country and preserving the peace. Let us also remember those who died in service to our country, and keep their families in our minds, hearts and prayers.

Wishing you and yours a healthy and safe November.

God bless America!



### November Holiday Office Closures

The Office of the Collier Clerk of Court, including satellite locations, will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

#### **Veterans Day**

Wed, Nov. 11

#### **Thanksgiving Holiday**

Thur., Nov. 26 and Fri., Nov. 27

## Collier Clerk Newsletter

November 2020

### Office Locations

#### Main Office

Courthouse

3315 Tamiami Trail E.  
Naples, FL 34112

#### Satellite Offices

##### Airport Motor Vehicle

725 Airport Road South  
Naples, FL 34104

##### Eagle Creek

6654 Collier Boulevard  
Naples FL 34114

##### Everglades City Hall

102 Copeland Ave. N.  
Everglades City, FL 34139

##### Golden Gate Gov. Center

4715 Golden Gate Parkway  
Naples, FL 34116

##### Immokalee

106 South First Street  
Immokalee, FL 34142

##### North Collier Gov. Ctr.

2335 Orange Blossom Drive  
Naples, FL 34109

### Customer Service

239-252-2646

www.CollierClerk.com



www.Facebook.com/CollierClerk



ONE-CENT  
SURTAX

## Project Costs Funded by Additional One-Cent Sales Tax are Increasing while Collected Proceeds Fall Below Initial Expectations

In the November 2018 general election, Collier County voters approved a ballot referendum that allowed Collier County government to collect from consumers an additional one-cent local sales tax, for the purpose of funding numerous capital projects. Beginning January 1, 2019, the additional one-cent levy increased the sales tax paid by consumers in Collier County from six percent to seven percent for a seven-year period, or as soon as \$490 million is collected. The one-cent sales tax applies to the first \$5,000 of the sales amount of tangible personal property, excluding groceries and medicine.

At the time of voter approval, the additional one-cent local sales tax was expected to generate, on average, \$70 million a year, or \$490 million over seven years, with approximately thirty percent of the total revenue expected to come from tourists and visitors.

Approximately ninety percent of the proceeds collected will fund County projects, with the remaining ten percent split amongst the county's three cities (Naples, Marco Island and Everglades City) for city-specific projects.

Prior to the vote, the Board of County Commissioners identified a list of County projects, and estimated project costs, that would be paid for with the County's portion of the revenue.

As we near the two-year point, we want to provide the community with an update on the status of funding and projects:

1. Cost estimates for many of the projects have increased beyond initial estimates ([see chart](#)).
2. Recent sales tax collections have fallen below initial projections due to this year's COVID business shut down period ([see chart](#)).

If revenues do not increase to make up these shortfalls, or costs continue to exceed projections, further funding will be required to complete the identified projects. This could result in the removal of some projects from the authorized list or the need to identify other funding sources to complete the projects.

### Have you Subscribed to the Clerk's Risk Alert Notification Program?

**PROTECT**  
*your most valuable*  
**INVESTMENT**



The FBI advises property owners to be on the alert for scammers filing fraudulent property documents, such as deeds, to make it appear as if they own property that is not actually theirs. These scammers then deceive people into giving them money to buy or rent the property or deceive financial institutions into giving them loan money.

Subscribers to our free *Risk Alert Notification Program* will receive an email alert if a deed, lien or other record matching the subscriber's exact name is recorded in the county's Official Record. If fraud did occur, the subscriber can quickly take the next steps with law enforcement agencies.

Subscribe for free at [www.CollierClerk.com](http://www.CollierClerk.com).



## **November 21 is National Adoption Day**

***Staff in the Clerk's Court Division perform  
important functions for each adoption***

National Adoption Day is held annually just before Thanksgiving Day, to raise awareness of the more than 125,000 children nationwide waiting to be adopted from the foster care system to loving, permanent homes.

Adoption is the legally created relationship between the adoptive parent(s) and the child. Adoptive parents are granted all the parental rights, privileges and responsibilities of the child as though the child was born to the adoptive parent(s).

Staff in the Collier County Clerk's Court Division perform important functions for each adoption, including attending proceedings, recording minutes, processing judgements and providing information finalization information to the Florida Department of Health-Bureau of Vital Statistics for the issuance of the new birth certificate.

In 2019, 51 adoptions were finalized in Collier County. In 2020, 29 adoptions have finalized to date and that number is expected to increase before the end of the year.

To learn how to become a foster parent or an adoptive parent, contact the Children's Network of Southwest Florida at 1-800-893-2645.

## **In Collier County, Circuit Court Judge Shannon McFee Presides Over Family Court Cases, including Adoptions**



On December 19, 2019, Governor Ron DeSantis appointed local attorney Shannon McFee to the Circuit Court of the Twentieth Judicial Circuit, to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Christine Greider.

On February 3, 2020, Judge McFee took the bench and immediately got to work presiding over Family Court cases including adoptions, custodial care matters, juvenile delinquency, truancy and domestic violence protection injunctions. Six weeks later, the nation was thrust into the COVID-19 National Health Emergency.

However, the pandemic couldn't break his stride, and with a "can-do" attitude Judge McFee never



missed a beat linking children and families with the services they need - all while holding "virtual" court with multiple parties participating from multiple remote locations.

If Judge McFee looks familiar, it may be because he grew-up in Collier County. He has coached boys' and girls' basketball and officiated over local high school football and basketball games. Prior to his judicial appointment, Judge McFee was a criminal defense attorney for many years and he served as an assistant state attorney in the Office of the State Attorney for the Twentieth Circuit.

**As the independently elected county auditor and custodian of public funds, the Clerk is responsible for ensuring taxpayer dollars are spent lawfully.**

**Report suspected fraud or wrongdoing in Collier County Government, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week.  
Call 239-252-8412 or the confidential hotline at 844-ClerkIG (7544). English or Spanish.**

## What is Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and how does it fund Community Redevelopment Areas and Innovation Zones?

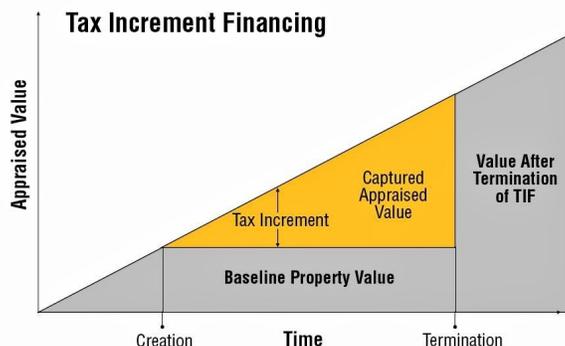
### What is Tax Increment Financing?

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a funding vehicle available to local government for redevelopment purposes and not for general purposes.

Upon creation of the district, the taxable value of the base year within the respective Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) or Innovation Zone (IZ) is frozen. The tax increment is the amount of taxes generated from increased property values within the district in excess of the base year.

The tax increment is then used to fund projects and programs designed to improve conditions within the designated areas and spur further redevelopment or job creation. The restriction of funds to CRA or IZ areas reduces funds that would otherwise be available to fund general government activities such as law enforcement, parks, and libraries. These designations could result in increased millage rates to compensate in the general fund.

Property tax revenue collected by school boards, fire districts and other special districts are not affected under the TIF process.



[View schedule of CRAs and Innovation zones and the dollars that have been provided to each.](#)

### Are there Community Redevelopment Areas (CRA) in Collier County?

Florida Statute Chapter 163 Part III authorizes local governments to establish CRAs for the purpose of improving specific sections within a community that are significantly distressed and blighted, using Tax Increment Financing (TIF). In Collier County, there are three Community Redevelopment Areas:

1. [City of Naples CRA](#) - Established in 1994 by the City of Naples Council the original designation was set to expire in 2024, however, in January 2014 the Naples City Council extended the sunset date to September 30, 2044. The Naples CRA receives revenue from both the City and the County, based on the increase over the 1993 base property tax value.
2. [Bayshore Gateway Triangle CRA](#) - Established in 2000 by the Board of County Commissioners for a 30-year period and will run through 2030 unless terminated or extended by Commissioners.
3. [Immokalee CRA](#) - Established in 2000 by the Board of County Commissioners for a 30-year period and will run through 2030 unless terminated or extended by Commissioners.

The Collier County Board of County Commissioners serves as the governing board for both CRA districts located in the county's jurisdiction, while the Naples City Council is the governing board for the Naples CRA district. An important role of the governing boards is to create a redevelopment plan for each district that addresses the district's unique needs, and then to ensure that projects and expenditures remain consistent with that plan.

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## **Are there Innovation Zones in Collier County?**

The Collier County Board of County Commissioners created the [Innovation Zone](#) program in 2010 for the purpose of promoting economic development. Innovation Zones function in a manner similar to a CRA. The Board has established three Innovation Zones in areas deemed to be underdeveloped and economically lagging. Like a CRA, the establishment of an Innovation Zone provides the means to generate money to pay for projects that are intended to spur economic growth within the boundaries of the zone using *Tax Increment Financing* (TIF).

In Collier County, three Innovation Zones have been established by the Board of County Commissioners:

1. Ave Maria Innovation Zone (2015) - Expiration date: September 30, 2021
2. Interchange Activity Center No. 9 (2018) - Intersection of I-75 and Collier Blvd.  
Expiration date: September 20, 2028
3. Golden Gate City Economic Development Zone (2018) - Covers areas within Golden Gate.  
Expiration date: September 30, 2029

**Note:** *Innovation Zones* must not be confused with *Opportunity Zones*. The Opportunity Zone Program is a federal program designed to encourage private investment in economically distressed areas ([Designated Opportunity Zones in Collier](#)

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## **Veterans Day is a Sacred Holiday for American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.**

*Thank you to Beth Haely, President, American Gold Star Mothers Department of Florida-Puerto Rico, for writing this article for the readers of the Collier Clerk's newsletter.*



November hosts one of the most sacred holidays for American Gold Star Mothers, Inc., Veterans Day. We are mothers whose sons and daughters died while in military service to our country, died as a result of their service (physical or invisible wounds), or are missing in action.

Our organization began in 1918 when Grace Darling Seibold stopped receiving letters from her precious son, George, who was fighting in France. To try to find out anything she could, she volunteered in the military hospital in Washington D.C. After the news of George's death, Grace realized that self-contained grief is self-destructive. She devoted her time and efforts to not only working in the hospital, but also to extending the hand of friendship to other mothers whose sons had lost their lives in military service.

The Southwest Florida Chapter of American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. formed just three years ago, yet our impact has been far reaching with a depth and love only a mother can know. Our mission is to **Honor Through Service**. This is how we keep the memory of our sons and daughters alive while volunteering. We are a nondenominational, nonpolitical, 501c3 nonprofit organization that offers material and financial support to veterans, their families, and families of the fallen. Additionally, we provide education regarding patriotism and the price of freedom.

If you are a Gold Star Mother, please contact us; we would love to hear about your precious child. If you are a veteran or know a veteran who is struggling with basic needs or resources, especially due to COVID-19, please reach out to us at [agsmofswfl@gmail.com](mailto:agsmofswfl@gmail.com).

American Gold Star Mothers of SWFL extends our most sincere gratitude to Collier County Veterans for their service and sacrifice. To learn more about our organization, please visit our website, [www.goldstarmothersswfl.org](http://www.goldstarmothersswfl.org).

*Beth Haely is the president of the American Gold Star Mothers Department of Florida-Puerto Rico and she served as the first president of the American Gold Star Mothers of Southwest Florida. She is the proud mother of USMC Corporal Thomas J. Jardas, who was one of twelve marines killed in a military helicopter accident in Hawaii on January 14, 2016.*

## Collier Clerk's Office to Hold Annual Driver License Reinstatement Event

### Operation Green Light

Friday, November 13, 2020

9 a.m. - 6 p.m.



**WHAT:** Operation Green Light is a driver license reinstatement event that offers individuals the opportunity to pay overdue fines, including traffic ticket fines, without paying the extra 32 percent collection fee. Individuals who meet all eligibility requirements will have their suspended driver license reinstated. Staff from the Collier Tax Collector's office will be on hand to print new licenses.

**WHEN:** 9 a.m. – 6 p.m., Friday, November 13, 2020

**WHERE:** Tax Collector/Clerk of Courts - Eagle Creek Satellite Office, 6654 Collier Blvd., Naples, FL 34114 (South of US 41, near the Walmart Superstore)

**WHY:** Florida law requires each clerk of court to hold at least one driver license reinstatement event annually.

A person *is not* eligible for reinstatement by the Clerk's office if his/her driver license is suspended or revoked for these reasons:

- Because the person failed to fulfill a court-ordered child support obligation;
- For DUI;
- Because the person has not completed a required driver training program, driver improvement course, or alcohol or substance abuse education or evaluation program;
- For a traffic-related felony; or
- Because the person is a habitual traffic offender as defined in Florida Statute 322.264.

Individuals experiencing financial hardship and struggling to pay court costs and fines, including traffic fines, are encouraged to speak to a Clerk's customer service representative about establishing a reasonable payment plan.

### Access Secure Online Services 24/7

[www.CollierClerk.com](http://www.CollierClerk.com)



- Pay traffic citations, court fees and fines
- Submit documents for recording in the Official Record
- File court documents via the Florida Courts e-Filing Portal
- Access frequently used forms
- Subscribe to the Risk Alert Notification service to monitor your property records for fraudulent activity
- Check for your name on the *unclaimed money* lists
- Access thousands of records to view and print, including:
  - ⇒ Court records (Civil, Traffic, Probate and Criminal);
  - ⇒ Official land records,
  - ⇒ Financial records & records of the Board of County Commissioners



The employees of the Clerk wish to express our gratitude to the men & women of our armed services, past & present, for your courage & sacrifices, and we would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy Thanksgiving.

