

## Letters to the Editor

# Beware the warning signs when hiring a contractor

Dear Editor:

It is a sad thing to write this letter – it truly is.

There is a grifter in our small town wearing a smile and a ball cap, posing as something he is not.

This man is one of our neighbors, a member of our congregation, a member of the PTA.

But, yet he is swindling people, and I was gullible to the “sell.”

I hired a local residential LLC that advertised to do all-around renovations and was licensed and insured to do such work.

After a year of trying to work with him, I was forced

to hire an attorney.

You see, he abandoned the job and left the flooring unfinished and never came back – in addition to improper installation and leaving the foyer unfinished, unsanded and unstained.

I filed complaints with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) and the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) after his lawyer responded to mine that somehow all of this is my fault.

Yes, I am guilty for falling prey to a real swindler, not doing my homework and relying on a handshake for

\$10,000 worth of work plus the flooring I had already bought.

The BBB wants to close the case and say I was unhappy with their response.

Well, yes! I am. It was my understanding that the BBB’s purpose was to help consumers avoid poor and unlicensed contractors. But, again, no consumer will gain any useful information on him from the BBB.

The investigator from the Florida DBPR was completely different.

His greeting when he called was an enthusiastic “I am so happy to hear from

you! We have been trying to get this guy for a while!”

Apparently, this guy has several cases against him, in addition to mine, which was split into two cases – one for electrical and one for construction.

He has apparently done work after Hurricane Idalia, which was considered a state of emergency, and acting as a licensed contractor during such an event qualifies as a third-degree felony category.

I wrote a letter to the editor when insurance checks started arriving in the mail with this very fear.

Thieves and grifters come

with many faces.

Please! If your contractor cannot provide a license number, and if you go to myfloridalicense.com and cannot locate them, it is a huge red flag!

If they tell you that you don’t need a permit, it may be because they aren’t authorized to pull one. Please call your local permit office to verify.

Most of the time licensed businesses and individuals have their license number printed on their card. If they are advertising themselves as being “licensed and insured” on business cards, Facebook or anywhere

else -- but are not actually licensed -- this is fraud!

Report them to the State Attorney’s Office for investigation.

This is how people get trapped.

All of these type of things cause innocent, and sometimes elderly, folks to be taken advantage of in an unfair and illegal way.

It happened to me.

I can afford to fight this individual in court.

I may recover nothing, nor make my point, but please, I urge you to make sure no one else bites this same hook!

Daniel Hartnett

# Many helped Taylor ‘put the pieces back together’

## CHAMBER BANQUET

Continued from page 1

challenges facing the community in the coming year.

“Change happens to all of us, whether we want it to or not,” Collins said. “Sometimes that change is slow. Sometimes you find that first gray hair on your head, and five years later, you find a few more. Maybe you find a few more pounds that you didn’t have, but it sneaks up on you.

“Sometimes, you have change in the form of a hurricane that comes through, and the town that you remembered the night before looks completely different when you go to bed the next night. It happens to all of us. It happens to every community.

“And, your chamber is going to change too,” Collins said. “We’re going to serve our members and this community better. That is my commitment that I make to you as your chamber chairman for 2024.

“We wouldn’t be in the position to make those changes and do things better if we didn’t have a tremendous chairman in 2023 to get us through that tremendous amount of change,” Collins said, calling for 2023 Chamber Board Chair Sandra Parker to come up and receive the Past Chairman Award.

“Thank you to everyone who supported me,” Parker said. “Our board was amazing. Everyone in our community came together through all of the trials we had last year. I had no idea what I was signing up for when I started, but it all worked out. Thank you to all of the elected officials who came and helped and supported us, whether it was trying to secure grant money or just being here

to support us. You are an army.”

A short video was shown depicting the devastation during and after Hurricane Idalia, followed by images of the many individuals and organizations who descended upon Taylor County in the storm’s wake to provide aid and support.

Then Chamber Executive Director Dawn Perez joined Collins and Parker for the awards ceremony.

“On behalf of the Perry-Taylor County Chamber of Commerce, we would like to thank those that helped us put the pieces back together,” Perez said.

Chamber officials began by thanking those who played a part in the recovery effort but could not be present at the banquet, including: Matthew 25: Ministries, Eight Days of Hope, Red Cross, Samaritan’s Purse, Holmes County Chamber of Commerce and Operation BBQ Relief.

Perez noted that Operation BBQ Relief alone provided more than 15,000 meals during their time in Taylor County after the hurricane.

Parker then thanked all of Taylor County’s state and federal representatives who “helped us in multiple ways, whether it was trying to get grant money to help us in the recovery or just being here as boots on the ground.”

Florida Sen. Corey Simon received his award in person, while representatives from the offices of Rep. Jason Shoaf, U.S. Senator Marco Rubio and U.S. Congressman Neal Dunn received awards on their behalf.

“After the hurricane, one of the first calls we got was from Florida Commerce, and we just want to give special thanks,” Parker said, presenting awards to Florida



New Chamber Chairman Danny Collins (right) presented Sandra Parker with the Past Chairman Award.

Secretary of Commerce Alex Kelley and Deputy Secretary Adam Callaway.

“Before the storm was completely past us, Taylor Correctional Institute (TCI) sent crews out to start clearing roads throughout the community,” Perez said. “For that reason, we’d like to thank TCI and Warden Larry Keen for everything they did. I’d like to point out that my husband is one of the officers that led crews in the cleanup efforts.”

“Putting in countless hours helping our community, the following departments worked tirelessly to keep us safe and get our community back up and running: Sheriff Wayne Padgett and the Taylor County Sheriff Office, Chief Jamie Cruse and the Perry Police Department, City Manager John Hart, County Administrator LaWanda Pemberton and Taylor County Emergency Director John Louk,” Parker said.

“We had an awesome team,” Louk said. “The county had to come together. In that Emergency Operations Center (EOC),

we had a bunch of people, a bunch of good leadership, and I want to thank everybody who pulled together in Taylor County to make it something that was a special response.”

“According to Louk, during Hurricane Idalia, Wendy Reynolds with the Florida Department of Emergency Management was assigned to the liaison position for Taylor County, arriving the afternoon prior to landfall and working around the clock for five days in our EOC office,” Parker said.

“Having the experience of being deployed for previous hurricanes, Wendy played a crucial role helping local Emergency Management stay on track with resources, staff assignments and specific needs prior to, during and after Idalia,” Parker said. “Thank you, Wendy Reynolds.

“Although they could not be with us this evening, the Incident Management Team brought in 21 experienced staff members to assist Taylor County for 14 days post landfall and were

monumental in dealing with the aftermath of the storm,” she continued.

Next to be recognized was David Coggins with the Florida Baptist Convention Disaster Relief Association.

“Thank you for all you and your team did in helping Taylor County,” Parker said.

“[VISIT Florida] immediately stepped in with efforts to help in the promotion of our area and allotted a \$100,000 grant to help with promoting Taylor County, boosting our tourism efforts through radio ads, social media and video creation,” Perez.

“Thank you VISIT Florida and Brenna Dacks.

“[Coca Cola] sent staff to help in the cleanup efforts of our community, as well as Forest Capital Park in preparation for upcoming events,” Perez said. “In addition, to help lift the spirits at our local schools, Coca Cola and staff went and prepared ice cream floats for all the students. Thank you Aurora Sanchez and Coca Cola.

“Tallahassee Rotary clubs sent individuals here equipped with chainsaws and other equipment to help clear roads and driveways, helping locals get access to their homes,” Perez said, recognizing Ben Graybar with the Tallahassee Sunrise Rotary Club.

“This individual traveled hours here to help feed over 10,000 hot meals in Taylor County – from Perry to Steinhatchee – during a time when our entire area was without electricity,” Perez said. “Working alone a great deal of the time, he would work without taking a break to see that everyone that was hungry was fed. Thank you

Danny Itzkovitz from the Franklin County Disaster Relief Organization.”

Although the 200-plus in attendance were boisterous in their applause as each recipient was named and walked to the front to accept their award, the largest round of applause by far came near the end of the ceremony, when all those in attendance gave a standing ovation to show their appreciation to a group of linemen – from both Duke Energy and Tri-County Electric Cooperative – who worked to restore power in the wake of the storm.

“Did you know that linemen must go through extensive and vigorous training, completing as many years of education as some physicians in order to be certified to do what they do for us?” Perez said. “A lineman’s job is more stressful than most, and they frequently go days without sleeping in a warm bed and sometimes spend weeks away from their families. These men have incredible physical and mental strength, working long hours, sometimes in extreme weather conditions.

“On behalf of the Perry-Taylor County Chamber of Commerce and the entire community, we’d like to thank you for doing what you do every day, without question, without hesitation,” she said. “Thank you.”

At the conclusion of the event, Moore took the microphone one last time to thank everyone who attended and to again emphasize the community’s resilience and ability to rise up and face the challenges together.

## LEGALS

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incidental purposes necessary to complete the Reconnection Work.

A Part Of Section 2, Township 4 South, Range 7 East, Taylor County, Florida, Being More Particularly Described As Follows:

Commence At A 4” Square Concrete Monument With Nail And Disk Stamped PRM 1428 At The S 1/4 Corner Of Section 2, Thence North 88°33’36” East Along The South Line Of Section 2, A Distance Of 1055.90 Feet To The Baseline Of Survey Of State Road 55, Also Known As U.S. 221 (A 100’ Width Right Of Way, As Per Florida Department Of Transportation Right Of Way Map, Section No. 38040, F.P. No. 4451471); Thence North 17°16’08” West, Along Said Baseline Of Survey Of State Road 55, A Distance Of 1396.03 Feet To The North Line Of The SW 1/4 Of The SE 1/4 Of Section 2; Thence North 88°49’22” East, Along Said North Line, A Distance Of 52.04 Feet To A Point On The Existing Easterly Right Of Way Line Of State Road 55; Thence Continue North 88°49’22” East, Along Said North Line, A Distance Of 20.82 Feet To The Point Of Beginning; Thence North 17°16’08” West, Parallel With Said Existing Easterly Right Of Way Of State Road 55, A Distance Of 12.30 Feet To The Easterly Bank Of A Creek; Thence Along Said Easterly Bank Of The Creek The Following Four (4) Courses: (1) North 30°06’33” East, A Distance Of 15.96 Feet; (2) North 53°46’07” East, A

Distance Of 6.06 Feet; (3) North 46°06’23” East, A Distance Of 26.71 Feet; (4) North 41°05’46” East, A Distance Of 21.90 Feet; Thence South 17°16’08” East, Parallel With The Said Existing Easterly Right Of Way Of State Road 55, A Distance Of 65.84 Feet To Said North Line Of The SW 1/4 Of The SE 1/4 Of Section 2; Thence South 88°49’22” West, Along Said North Line, A Distance Of 62.45 Feet To The Point Of Beginning.

Containing 2,405 Square Feet, More Or Less.

THIS EASEMENT shall be for a period of thirty-eight (38) months commencing on the date the State of Florida Department of Transportation becomes the owner of this easement. Being a Part of Tax Parcel No. 02087-115

A petition in eminent domain has been filed to acquire certain property interests in Taylor County, Florida.

Each Defendant is required to serve written defenses to the petition to Petitioner’s attorney, whose name and address are shown below, on or before April 9, 2024 and to file the original of the defenses with the clerk of this court either before service on Petitioner’s attorney or immediately thereafter, showing what right, title, interest or lien Defendant has in or to the property described in the petition and to show cause why that property should not be taken for the uses and purposes set forth in the petition. If any Defendant fails to do so, a default will be entered

against that Defendant for the relief demanded in the petition.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a declaration of taking has been filed in this cause and that Petitioner will apply for an Order of Taking and any other order the court deems proper before the Honorable Gregory S. Parker, one of the Judges of this Court, on Thursday, May 2, 2024, at 11:00 a.m., (one hour is reserved) via Zoom conferencing ([https://zoom.us/j/93786525023?pwd=SNFTU2wwL1paU1FQMxMzcEOWwKxZUT09](https://zoom.us/j/93786525023?pwd=SNFTU2wwL1paU1FQMxMzcEOWwKxZUT09;); Meeting ID: 937 8652 5023, Passcode: 680731; Mobile 1-786-635-1003). All Defendants to this suit may request a hearing at the time and place designated and be heard at the time and place designated and be heard. Any Defendant failing to file a request for hearing shall waive any right to object to the Order of Taking.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL OF THIS COURT on the 23rd day of February, 2024.

GARY KNOWLES  
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT  
TAYLOR COUNTY, FLORIDA  
By: Kathryn Lago  
Deputy Clerk

**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**  
**MARCH 4, 2024**

A special meeting of the North Florida College District Board of Trustees will be held on the above date at 5:30 p.m. in the North Florida College Board Room located in the Student Center in Madison, FL.

**Taco Times**

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

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Perry, Florida

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The Taco Times welcomes Letters to the Editor reflecting responsible opinions and views on the news. Please submit letters by Monday at 5 p.m. The Taco Times reserves the right to refuse publication of letters which are libelous or irresponsible. Name may be withheld if circumstances so require, but all letters submitted should be signed by the writer and accompanied by a phone number for verification.

We look forward to hearing from you! Our address is Perry, Newspapers, Inc., P.O. Box 888, Perry, Florida 32348. e-mail: [newsdesk@perrynewspapers.com](mailto:newsdesk@perrynewspapers.com)

Member Perry/Taylor County Chamber of Commerce.

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