Saturday, June 27, 2015 TCPalm.com

Coming Sunday





MOBILE HOMES

The mobile-home business model that once helped drive Florida's tourism and retirement economy is no longer is viable, experts say. See how mobile home park owners and homeowners associations are adapting to survive in the changing economy.

LIABILITIES

Taxpayers are on the hook for \$530 million in debt for retiree benefits other than pensions — for local government workers. The "pay-asyou-go" approach most governments take to financing the perks, mainly subsidies for health insurance premiums, passes the cost of current employee benefits onto future taxpayers.

AMENDMENT 1

Guest columnists face off in the fight over spending for natural resources. Maggy Hurchalla says lawmakers ignored the will of voters when spending Amendment 1 funds. Brewster Bevis says the Florida Legislature ensured those dollars benefit everyone.

SEINING RESULTS

Is the Indian River Lagoon on the road to recovery? Columnist **Anthony Westbury** looks at the evidence.



today.

The Constitution grants them that right." — Justice Anthony Kennedy

Gay marriage ruled equal

"They ask for equal dignity in the eyes of the law.

Same-sex couples won the right to marry nationwide Friday as a divided Supreme Court handed a crowning victory to the gay rights movement, setting off a jubilant cascade of long-delayed weddings in states where they had been forbidden.

"No longer may this liberty be denied," said Justice Anthony Kennedy.

The vote was narrow — 5-4 — but Kennedy's majority opinion was clear and firm: "The court now holds that same-sex couples may exercise the fundamental right to marry."

To read about the monumental decision, go to Page 15A.



The crowd reacts as the ruling on same-sex marriage was announced Friday outside the Supreme Court in Washington.

COVERAGE ON 15A

\$1.00

STORY: Court's ruling puts end to remaining bans on same-sex marriage.

OPINIONS: Read some of the majority and dissenting opinions, plus what other prominent names had to say.

HOLD-OUTS: Marriage licenses denied or delayed in 14 states yet to legalize gay marriage.

TIMELINE: Take a look back at selected rulings that led to Friday's decision.



INDIAN

RIVER

TOP TAKEAWAYS

the Oculina Bank for the

first time in 20 years

could not find the coral

reef.
2. It's unknown whether

hurricanes, trawling nets or something else

3. Yet sea life thrives in

that are replacing the

4. More exploration is

5. Protecting the reef

spawning ground for

grouper.

needed because finding

the reef could help protect

would protect an important

fish, such as snapper and

patchy deepwater reefs

destroyed the coral.

1. Scientists who surveyed two spots on

LAGOON

Deck boss Jeremy Addaway cleared the back of the Baseline Explorer research vessel as a Triton 1000/2 submarine carrying assistant research professor Joshua Voss and Brownie's Global Logistics founder Robert Carmichael prepare to search the sea floor in 300 feet of water for Oculina coral.

In search of Oculina

■ Coral reef can't be found. but life thrives in some spots

By Tyler Treadway tyler.treadway@tcpalm.com

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Three days of searching with divers and submarines this week, and all scientists found on the deepwater Oculina Bank reef was a few dozen pieces of coral, most no bigger than a person's finger.

They had hoped to find a thriving reef several miles off the St. Lucie Inlet to further protect it, and the multitude of snapper and grouper

that live and spawn on it. The reef, stretching from Cape Canaveral to the Fort Pierce Inlet, is protected



Assistant research professor Joshua Voss (right) points out an area that could be home to Oculina coral while talking with project manager Todd Kincaid before heading to the sea floor to search for the protected coral.

from bottom fishing, particularly coral-crushing trawler nets, but it hasn't been seen south of Fort Pierce since the mid-1980s. That's when Fort Piercebased Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute

researcher John Reed first discovered extensive reefs of "Oculina varicosa," also known as ivory tree coral, swarming with 70 species of fish.

See OCULINA, 6A

Local science facility at risk

■ Invasive species center hurt by veto

Staff report

FORT PIERCE - The Invasive Species Quarantine Facility could close in the wake of a \$900,000 state budget cut this week.

That would leave the Treasure Coast's native plants unprotected, its invasive species growing unchecked and its farmers without the facility's advice on controlling pests that damage agricultural crops.

Gov. Rick Scott on Tuesday vetoed the center's \$720,000 annual funding for operating expenses plus an \$180,000 increase facility officials thought they were getting. They even issued a news release Monday expressing their thanks for the money.

"The funds cut will affect the jobs of a total of 12 people — a mix of scientists and support staff," said Jack Payne, senior vice president for Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Florida. "I'm trying to find some way of keeping the center open and maintaining a skeleton staff until we can request new funding for next year. Since the Legislature meets earlier next year, we won't have to wait as long for an answer."

The Legislature's regular session typically runs from March to May, but lawmakers changed it to January through March

See FACILITY, 6A

Sullivan's attorneys bemoan 'rush to judgment'

■ Prominent lawyer charged with sexual battery

By Laurie K. Blandford laurie.blandford@tcpalm.com 772-409-1328

VERO BEACH – Prominent local attorney Charles Sullivan Sr. is out of the Indian River County Jail on a \$25,000 bond awaiting a court date in August, as his team of lawyers accuse police officials of rushing to judgment in charging him with sexual battery. He was charged

Thursday based on the

accusations of a female employee who has worked in the 82-year-old's law office for a year. She told police his behavior started becoming inappropriate a few months ago.

The woman accuses

Sullivan of making lewd comments, brushing up against her, placing his hand down her blouse, exposing himself to her, reaching up her skirt and fondling her, police said. She said she warned him to stop, but she told detectives the advances contin-

INSIDE

Reisman: Case against local legal icon should be interesting. 2A

Sullivan's attorneys said they will do their own aggressive investigation into

See SULLIVAN, 6A



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FROM 1A

OCULINA from 1A

Scientists Friday found what appeared to be the remnants of an ivory tree coral reef in nearly 300 feet of water 9½ miles off the inlet. The area obviously had been destroyed by something — hurricanes, trawling nets, something else; Harbor Branch researcher Joshua Voss couldn't be sure.

Yet scientists saw lots of sea life on patches of coral that's replacing the Oculina, including a couple of grouper — one a pregnant female.

"It's impressive that even such marginal habitat can support life," Voss said. "And if we can connect grouper to that habitat, we have a chance of protecting it. Fish drive protection; it's as simple as that."

To protect the reef, more underwater surveys are needed, and could happen later this summer, Voss said.

With evidence, scientists can make their case to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council to extending the Oculina Bank protection zone south to the St. Lucie Inlet.

"If we can find additional Oculina reef or a high density of other corals, we can prove that this is an important fish-producing area to protect," Voss said. "And if we don't, at least what we've found here shows the damage that can be done to Oculina reefs and the need to protect the ones still around."

REEF MADNESS

Hunting for coral reefs in 300 feet of ocean water

SULLIVAN from 1A

the accusations, which they said Sullivan denies.

"He's had an ongoing dispute or dislike with Vero Beach Police Department because he's tried many cases against them and has been very successful," said Robert Stone, who is representing Sullivan and is a longtime friend.

Attorney Andrew Metcalf said they would give Sullivan "the investigation that he was not afforded by the police before they made a decision.

i ve never seen a case move this rapidly and this reckless," said Metcalf, who is vice president of the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

Bruce Colton, state attorney for the 19th Judicial Circuit, asked Gov. Rick Scott to assign a different jurisdiction to prosecute the case to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest. The request was granted and the 18th Judicial Circuit, which covers Brevard and Seminole counties, will handle the case. As of late Friday, the case still is scheduled to be heard in Indian River County next at 9 a.m. Aug. 10.

Colton said his reasons for removing his office from the case surrounds the fact he has a lot of interaction with Sullivan's law firm on cases.

"I have no fear or doubt that we could've handled Colton said Friday afternoon. "But, if we did, and something went wrong and the charge had to be dropped, or we lost the case, people in the community could think that we did it purposely because we were showing favoritism to Charlie Sullivan, who's a longtime local

lawyer. "On the other hand, since we often have a contentious relationship with the people in his office going back and forth on criminal cases, it could be looked at that we are unjustly aggressively going after him ...'

Sullivan appeared before Judge Joe Wild on Friday morning via video from the jail wearing an orange jumpsuit and hand-

cuffs. Nearly all of Sullivan's office staff was in the courtroom and his

FAST FACTS

Pronunciation: "ock-yew-LINE-uh," rhymes with Carolina Location: About 200 miles long, about 12-20 miles off Florida's Atlantic coast in water 150-350 feet deep Feature: Extensive reefs of "Oculina varicosa," aka ivory tree coral, that can grow in mounds up to 60 feet tall and be 1,000 years old

Why it's important: Home to thousands of tiny animals that attract -plus fish species, including snapper (red and mangrove) and grouper (gag, red, scamp and snowy)

Indian River Lagoon link: Snapper and grouper spawn on reef, newborns head to lagoon for food and protection,

Protections: In 1984, about 300 square miles from Cape Canaveral to Fort Pierce was closed to trawling, dredging, longline fishing and trapping. In 1994, all bottom fishing became prohibited in an offshore area between Fort Pierce and Sebastian Inlet.

Namesake: A Vero Beach-based financial institution with Treasure Coast branches is named for the offshore reef.

is a daunting, time- and money-consuming and often discouraging job.

Here's how it was done Friday:

A two-man sub made by Triton Submarines in Vero Beach was launched where some scattered spiral coral was found late Thursday. It was managed by Voss and Robert Carmichael, co-founder of Project Baseline, a worldwide underwater exploration and conservation nonprofit.

Within half an hour, they reported finding scattered Oculina coral rubble in 288 feet of water.

The sub held its position, with a spotter boat directly above in communication with Voss and Carmichael. Then it gets tricky, thanks

to the strong south-to-north Gulf Stream currents. The main ship, The Baseline Explorer, headed about a mile up-current of

the sub to deploy three divers into the water. The sub is good at finding coral reefs, said Todd Kincaid, a diver and Project Baseline science director, but the divers do better at getting up-close images of the coral and collecting samples.

At first, the divers drifted downstream with the ship, checking and doublechecking their equipment in the water.

When the ship was about 1,500 feet from the spotter boat, the divers submerged, using hand-held motors with propellers, officially called "diver propulsion vehicles" but usually referred to as "scooters," to take them to the sub.

Given Friday's 3.9 mph current, the limited visibility and the expanse of the ocean, finding the sub was "less than a 50-50 shot," Kincaid said. Odds proved too steep Friday: The sub and the divers didn't rendezvous.

Still, the sub was able to take videos and photos of about half a mile of the ocean floor while under water for more than 21/2 hours.



Vero Beach attorney Charles Sullivan Sr. (center), 82, makes his first appearance for a sexual battery charge from the Indian River County Jail televised inside Judge Joe Wild's courtroom at the Indian River County Courthouse Friday morning. To see more photos, go to TCPalm.com.

family was rallying around qualifications for release to support mm, said Bobby Guttridge, a colleague of

Sullivan's. "He's a great guy," Guttridge said. "He's been a tremendous mentor and somebody to look up to and a respected person in

the legal community." Stone asked for a reasonable bond for his client, saying Sullivan isn't a flight risk or danger to the

community. "He's 82 years old and has been here for over 50 years," Stone said. "He's a great contribution to this

community." Wild then asked Sullivan if he had anything to

"I've been a lawver for 58 years," Sullivan said. "I've lived here in Florida all my adult life. I own property here. I'm a substantial taxpayer. I'm not going anywhere, and I think I would meet the

on my own recognizance Instead, Wild set Sullivan's bond amount at \$25,000 and said the condition of his release would be no contact with his accuser.

Stone said the woman waging the accusations didn't work for Sullivan; she worked for his son, Charles Sullivan Jr., who works with Guttridge. All three attorneys work in the same office at 1601 20th St. near the Indian River County Courthouse, but the elder Sullivan is on his

Metcalf said the woman hasn't returned to the office, and he didn't know her employment status.

'What we're asking everyone to do is just reserve judgment at this time," Metcalf said. "I know this man, and I know, at the end of the day, it's going to turn out the way it should."



FACILITY from 1A

for 2016, an election year with a March 15 presidential preference primary. Scott's cuts came during a June 1-20 special session.

Sen. Joe Negron, R-Stuart, did not return calls seeking comment on the issue, and Rep. Larry Lee, D-Port St. Lucie, said he didn't know what would happen in January.

Payne is trying to gather a coalition of groups affected by the budget cuts, such as environmental communities and agricultural commodities groups, in hopes of submitting a collective request for funds next year.

Scott's line-item veto noted the facility "has not demonstrated any impact,' Payne said, begging to differ with the governor.

The facility's biocontrols live animals, usually insects, that eat invasive species, usually plants — have We have a glimmer of hope with the possibility of the with the possibility of the legislative override. If that doesn't happen, we'll have to figure out another way for the lab not to close." - Bill Overholt, entomology professor

saved farmers and ranchers \$5 million a year, Payne said. Examples of the facility's work include releasing two types of insects to eat invasive Brazilian peppers and an insect that eats tropical soda apple, "an invasive species cattlemen hate," Payne said.

The Legislature spent \$3.9 million to open the facility in 2004, with the help of The Nature Conservancy and Florida Native Plant Society.

The facility is part of the Indian River Research and Education Center, which is part of UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences on Pecos Road that opened in 1947. Entomology Professor Bill Overholt hoped for a legislative override before the July 1 beginning of the new fiscal year, but lawmakers have said it's un-

likely they'd call a session

to undo Scott's cuts.

We have a glimmer of hope with the possibility of the legislative over-ride," Overholt said. "If that doesn't happen, we'll have to figure out another way for the lab not to close. At this point, we just have to wait and see what happens next."

Treasure Coast Newspapers contributor Brenda Silva provided some information for this report.

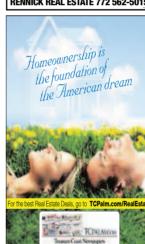
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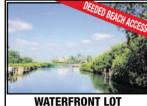


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