Quarterly Issues Report

WUSF Public Media

News Stories

Florida Matters Public Affairs Show

University Beat

Jan. 1 – Mar. 31, 2012
Quarterly Issues Report

WUSF News Stories Jan. 1 – March 31, 2011

The Legislature Draws Another Senate Map

TAMPA (2012-3-27) - The Florida Legislature is sending a revised Senate redistricting map back to the state Supreme Court. The House on Tuesday gave the map final approval.

By Craig Kopp

Wildlife Corridor Expedition Crosses Florida's Wildlife Barrier - I-4

TAMPA (2012-3-19) - The Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition The group is swinging east of Orlando's sprawl and are paddling up the St. John's River. On Sunday, they crossed one the state's great dividing lines for wildlife - Interstate 4.

By Steve Newborn

Sanford Police Chief "Temporarily" Resigns in Wake of Trayvon Martin Case

TAMPA (2012-3-22) - The police chief of Sanford has "temporarily resigned," pending an investigation into his department's handing of the slaying of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. Bill Lee offered to step down this afternoon in a press conference outside Sanford City Hall.

By Steve Newborn

How Trayvon Martin's High School Reacted To His Public Death

MIAMI (2012-03-21) - It's been nearly a month since self-appointed neighborhood watch captain George Zimmerman shot and killed Trayvon Martin, an unarmed teen in Sanford, Fla. Martin's death has inspired a national debate about race and justice.

By Sarah Gonzalez

Polk County Sheriff's Office Sued for Treatment of Minors in Lockups

TAMPA (2012-3-21) - Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd is back in the news - this time, he's been sued for jailing minors near adults.

By Steve Newborn and John O'Connor
USF BasketBulls Celebrate Their Season

TAMPA (2012-3-21) - The USF Bulls Basketball team fell just short of the NCAA’s Sweet Sixteen, but a crowd gathered today at the university’s Tampa Campus to celebrate their success. Bulls Coach Stan Heath - who was honored as the Big East Coach of the Year - told the crowd that they’ll be back.

By Steve Newborn

USF Corrals Smokers on Tampa Campus

TAMPA (2012-3-20) - The University of South Florida’s Tampa campus has become one of the biggest places in the state to ban smoking outdoors. Today was the first day where smokers had to drag their butts to a handful of designated areas around campus.

By Steve Newborn

New USF College of Business Dean Has Varied Pedigree

TAMPA (2012-3-20) - After an eight month world-wide search, the USF College of Business has found its new dean - Dr. Moez Limayen. He comes from the Sam M. Walton College of Business at the University of Arkansas, which U.S. World and News Reports ranked as the 25th best among public universities.

By Yoselis Ramos

5 Things Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn Told WUSF

TAMPA (2012-3-19) - On Florida Matters this week, WUSF brings you an exclusive interview with Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn. Host Carson Cooper traveled to Tampa City Hall to talk with the first-term mayor.
1- On Being the ‘Pool Guy’

By Carson Cooper and Bobbie O’Brien

Why School Leaders Say There’s Nothing Sexual About Paddling Students

MIAMI (2012-03-15) - Our story on Florida schools that paddle students was picked up by NPR and we’ve gotten some comments from folks who wondered about a sexual element to spanking. John Shelley wrote: "Why do they hit the kids in the butt? Is this a sexual thing?"
By Sarah Gonzalez

Tampa Council Approves Domestic Partnership Registry

TAMPA (2012-3-15) - Tampa City Council voted unanimously Thursday to establish a Domestic Partners Registry. Whether same sex or heterosexual, domestic partners living in Tampa will soon be protected and treated like family when it comes to things like hospital visitations and medical decisions.

By Bobbie O'Brien

Florida Lawmakers Authorize Veterans' Courts

TAMPA (2012-3-14) - Florida is home to more than 1.6 million veterans. So, it’s no surprise that Florida lawmakers passed several bills this session that benefit military veterans and active duty service members. Among the bills agreed upon was the “T. Patt Maney Veterans Treatment Intervention Act.”

By Bobbie O'Brien

Why Florida Schools Can Paddle Students Against Parents’ Wishes

Miami-2012-03-13 - State law allows schools in Florida to punish students by spanking them with a paddle, which is often a wooden or fiber-glass board.

By Sarah Gonzalez

Meet Lightning Owner Jeff Vinik: Shy, Competitive, Driven

TAMPA (2012-3-13) - Jeff Vinik became the new owner of the Tampa Bay Lightning just over two years ago and quickly won over fans and local officials for what he’s done both on and off the ice.

By Carson Cooper and Bobbie O'Brien

GOP Convention: Should We Stay Or Should We Go?

TAMPA (2012-3-13) - There’s a rising discussion on whether Tampa Bay residents should stay in the region or head out on vacation the last week of August when the area hosts the Republican National Convention that could attract as many as 50,000 people.

By Bobbie O'Brien
Drug Testing State Employees Will Fail A Constitutional Test

TAMPA (2012-3-12) - Last week the Florida State Legislature approved random drug testing of state employees. Governor Scott is expected to sign that into law.

By Craig Kopp

USF Health + Florida Hospital = 2 Providers, 3 Counties, 4 Specialties

TAMPA (2012-3-12) - "It's the best of healthcare from a futuristic, entrepreneurial and academic point of view." That's how USF Health CEO Dr. Stephen Klasko describes an agreement between his organization and Florida Hospital—an arrangement that puts university medical research into practice in Florida Hospital locations around the Bay area.

By Mark Schreiner

As RNC Picks a Candidate, The Hosts Hope to Pull In Business

TAMPA (2012-3-13) - In just over five months, organizers expect about 15,000 members of the news media to descend on the Tampa Bay region to cover the Republican National Convention. Their goal will be to cover who wins the GOP nomination.

By Bobbie O'Brien

Why Florida Schools Want the Right to Paddle Misbehaving Students

Miami-2012-03-12 - Spanking in school may seem like a relic of the past. But in Florida, students from pre-schoolers to high school seniors are still being paddled by teachers and principals.

By Sarah Gonzalez

USF Bulls Make the Big Dance

TAMPA (2012-3-11) - For the first time in 20 years, the USF Bulls' basketball team has made the NCAA Basketball Tournament. It was a nail-biting wait for the Bulls, who received one of the final four spots given to at-large teams.

By Mark Schreiner
Florida Lawmakers Establish a Purple Heart Day

TAMPA (2012-3-10) - The Florida Legislature has approved three veteran related bills this session including one that sets aside August 7th each year as Purple Heart Day.

By Bobbie O'Brien

Wildlife Corridor Expedition Brushes With Sprawl, Horses - And The President

KISSIMMEE (2012-3-12) - The Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition has emerged from the wilderness and is now skirting around Orlando's suburban sprawl. The group recently stopped at the Disney Wilderness Preserve on horseback, and they received an unexpected gift - from President Obama.

By Steve Newborn

A Tale of Two Chambers: Florida Legislature 2012

TAMPA (2012-3-9) - The regular session of the Florida Legislature wrapped up in Tallahassee Friday. And you could call this year, "A Tale of Two Chambers."

By Craig Kopp

Battling Fatigue - and the Elements - With the Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition

KISSIMMEE (2012-3-19) - You'd think that wading through some of the most impenetrable swamps in Florida and traveling 1,000 miles from the Everglades to Georgia would be tough enough.

By Steve Newborn

Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition Gets Surprise Gift from President Obama

KISSIMMEE (2012-3-8) - The Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition neared civilization today. The group stopped at a wilderness preserve on the edge of Orlando's sprawl, where they received an unexpected gift - from President Obama.

By Steve Newborn
Lakeland's "Child of the Sun" Campus Named National Historic Landmark

LAKELAND (2012-3-7) - It has the largest collection of Frank Lloyd Wright architecture in one spot anywhere. Now, Florida Southern College has finally been named a National Historic Landmark.

By Steve Newborn

Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition Nears Halfway Mark in Statewide Journey

LAKE PLACID (2012-3-7) - The Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition is nearing the halfway mark of their trip up the length of Florida - 1,000 miles in 100 days. Their mission is to publicize the need to connect the state's disjointed wild areas into a continuous wildlife corridor.

By Steve Newborn

Glorioso: Alexander Killed HCI Funding


By Bobbie O'Brien

USF Budget Deal Could Mean Higher Tuition

TAMPA (2012-3-6) - Just three weeks ago, the University of South Florida was confronted with a $128 million cut in funding at its Tampa campus. That proposed 60 percent budget reduction is now down to 21 percent for USF/Tampa which President Judy Genshaft said is fair and in line with universities of similar size.

By Bobbie O'Brien

HCI Closure: Is It Political Payback? Who Gets Hurt?

TAMPA (2012-3-5) - For a brief time last week, it appeared Hillsborough Correctional Institution, the women’s faith-and-character based prison set for closure, would receive a reprieve. But reports surfaced over the weekend, HCI is back on the list to be shut-down.

By Bobbie O'Brien
MacDill Airman Wraps Up His Afghanistan Deployment

TAMPA (2012-3-5) - Recent news out of Afghanistan has focused mainly on protests and killings linked to the incident when U.S. forces burned some Korans allegedly used to pass messages among prisoners. But there is different news from outlying provinces far removed from Kabul.

By Bobbie O'Brien

Wildlife and Warplanes in the Florida Wildlife Corridor

AVON PARK (2012-3-5) - There are more than just birds and alligators being encountered by the Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition as they make their way up the middle of Florida. Try bombs. And jets. And attack helicopters.

By Carson Cooper

Students and Head Trustee at USF Protest Budget Cuts

TAMPA (2012-3-1) - USF is facing a budget cut of around 20 percent. That could affect everything from summer school to the operation of the new pharmacy college.

By Steve Newborn and Yoselis Ramos

Dean Says USF College of Pharmacy Needs $6 Million

TAMPA (2012-2-29) - The Florida Senate originally planned to zero out funding for the USF College of Pharmacy but later reinstated half of the $6 million the school says it needs.

By Yoselis Ramos

George LeMieux Says Character An Issue in Senate Campaign

TAMPA (2012-2-29) - The Republican Senate primary campaign in Florida has heated up fast, after information about Connie Mack IV's legal past was published in Tampa and Miami - and then used in some animated ads on the internet by his main opponent, former Sen. George LeMieux.

By Craig Kopp
Becoming Global Citizens

TAMPA (2012-2-28) - The founder of interdependencemovement.org is speaking at a free public forum at St, Petersburg College Seminole Campus. Dr. Benjamin Barber's topic: Global Citizenship. WUSF News talked with Dr. Barber about what he defines as global citizenship. After all, aren't we all citizens of the world?

By Craig Kopp

Senate Approves Repair Funds for Hillsborough Correctional

TAMPA (2012-2-27) - This week senate and house members begin the work of merging their two somewhat different budget bills. One sticking point is the creation of a 12th public university and both legislative bodies also were at odds on prison closures. That's no longer the case for one prison in Hillsborough County.

By Bobbie O'Brien

Ancient Scrub Greets Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition

LAKE PLACID (2012-2-27) - It all starts with the man who designed the Brooklyn Bridge. His grandson - John Roebling II - inherited more than 1,000 acres in Highlands County, and gave it to Richard Archbold, an aviator and explorer of exotic places such as Madagascar and New Guinea. It's now Archbold Biological Station.

By Steve Newborn

Odyssey's Golden Treasure on Its Way to Spain

TAMPA (2012-2-24) - More than 17 tons of shipwreck treasure is being flown from Tampa’s MacDill Air Force Base to Spain.

By Bobbie O'Brien

Grand Jury Investigates Rep. Vern Buchanan

TAMPA (2012-2-24) - A federal grand jury in Tampa is investigating Sarasota Congressman Vern Buchanan, according to a story today in the New York Times.

By Scott Finn
Independent USF Poly Would Take Longer To Earn Accreditation

TAMPA (2012-2-24) - The Chronicle of Higher Education has condensed the months-long saga over the University of South Florida Polytechnic’s future into one handy story.

By John O’Connor

Alexander: I Don’t Enjoy Getting Into It Like This

TAMPA (2012-2-24) - A bill to grant immediate independence to a new university in Polk County generated some passionate debate from its sponsor, Senate budget chief JD Alexander, R-Lake Wales.

By Scott Finn

USF President Expresses Some Relief On Lessened Budget Cuts

TAMPA (2012-2-23) - USF President Judy Genshaft expressed some relief after hearing that state Senators trimmed USF’s share of its budget cut from nearly 60 percent to 23 percent. But she hopes the cuts won’t last beyond the next year.

By Steve Newborn

Green Card Stories

TAMPA (2012-2-23) - Saundra Amrhein is the author of the new book, "Green Card Stories", a collection of profiles and photographs of fifty immigrants living all over the United States. One of the immigrants featured in the book is Cleto Chazares, who is now the principal of Simmons Career Center in Plant City.

By Alicia Zuckerman

Hillsborough Correctional Chef Holds onto Hope and a Prayer

TAMPA (2012-2-23) - Lawmakers and state officials are working on closing Hillsborough Correctional Institution and five other prisons as a “cost saving measure.” And a few inmates have reportedly been transferred.

By Bobbie O’Brien
Tampa City Council Votes to Draft Domestic Partner Registry

TAMPA (2012-2-23) - The Tampa City Council voted Thursday to have city lawyers come up with a new ordinance that would create a domestic partner registry for Tampa residents. When she introduced the proposal, Tampa councilwoman Yvonne Yolie Capin says it's been on her mind for awhile.

By Yoselis Ramos

Volunteers Say Inmates Being Transferred Out of Hillsborough Correctional Institute

TAMPA (2012-2-23) - Even as lawmakers debate whether to close a women's prison in southern Hillsborough County, the state Department of Corrections is already transferring some inmates out. That's according to volunteers at Hillsborough Correctional Institution, who have been fighting to keep the prison open.

By Bobbie O'Brien

Senate Candidates Questioned on Property Tax Breaks

TAMPA (2012-2-22) - The race for the U.S. Senate in Florida appears to be heating up. Incumbent Democrat Sen. Bill Nelson is up for re-election. His leading Republican opponent, Congressman Connie Mack, recently criticized Nelson for taking an agricultural tax exemption on his land.

By Bobbie O'Brien

Senator JD Alexander Gives His Take on USF Budget Cuts

TALLAHASSEE (2012-2-22) - Senator JD Alexander has said the the way USF supporters have portrayed proposed budget cuts is unfair. He says the cuts proposed for USF are justified because of the university's reserves and not that different from other similar institutions, such as UCF.

WUSF, USF and Coverage of the Fight Over Budget Cuts

TAMPA (2012-2-22) - We've been asked by several of our listeners about WUSF's relationship to USF as the station covers the fight over budget cuts to the university. I'd like to take this opportunity to answer some of them. Why don't you put a disclaimer on every story you run on USF?

By Scott Finn
Genshaft: Lawmakers Hearing "Don't Mess with USF"

TAMPA (2012-2-21) - USF President Judy Genshaft says there’s one positive side effect of almost having $128 million cut from the budget: seeing the Tampa Bay delegation and community rally around USF.

By Scott Finn

USF Student Government Sets Up Letter Writing Campaign

TAMPA (2012-2-21) - In the age of e-mail and social media, the student government at the University of South Florida is trying something a little-bit different: an old-fashioned letter writing campaign.

By Scott Finn

Wildlife Corridor Expedition Tours Florida's Largest State-owned Ranch

TAMPA (2012-2-20) - The Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition has just come out of one of the wildest places in Florida - if not the entire country - the Fakahatchee strand. We also speak with Mallory Lykes Dimmitt on how the Babcock Ranch Preserve is faring as a publically-run ranch.

By Carson Cooper and Steve Newborn

Hiring Our Heroes Veterans Job Fair Comes to Tampa

TAMPA (2012-2-20) - Hiring our Heroes is a national program created by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce that focuses on bringing together veterans looking for a job and military friendly employers. Almost a year old, the program promised to hold 100 Veteran Career Fairs throughout the U.S. in a year.

By Bobbie O'Brien

Lawmakers Could Ask More Of Bright Futures Scholars

TALLAHASSEE (2012-17-2) - Elisa Huapilla is the first person in her family to attend college. She didn’t know what to expect at Florida State University. A lottery-funded Bright Futures scholarship pays part of the tuition.

By John O'Connor

Demystifying The Relationship Between Humans and Sharks
SARASOTA (2012-2-20) - When we hear the word "shark," the first image that comes to many people's minds is the movie "Jaws." Juliet Eilperin is trying to wash that image away. She's the author of a new book about how sharks play an important role in the marine system - and how they're being wiped off the map.

By Steve Newborn

"Freakonomics" Author to Speak in Tampa Tonight

TAMPA (2012-2-16) - School teachers, sumo wrestlers, politicians and drug dealers may be just some of the topics discussed when Stephen Dubner, co-author of the "Freakonomics" book series, speaks at the Tampa Theater tonight.

By Mark Schreiner

USF Health CAMLS Prepares for Launch

TAMPA (2012-2-16) - USF Health will formally open its new Center for Advanced Medical Learning and Simulation (CAMLs) facility at the end of March, but reporters were able to get a look inside this week.

By Mark Schreiner

Inside the Mathematical Equation That Will Grade and Pay Teachers

MIAMI (2012-2-16) - School has always been about grading students. But now 24 states in the country are starting to grade teachers.

By Sarah Gonzalez

USF Vice Provost: Cuts Could Impact Class Size, Summer School

TAMPA (2012-2-16) - Days after the Florida Senate surprised the University of South Florida with a proposal to immediately spin off USF Polytechnic into a separate university, the Senate's budget committee proposed cutting USF's funding by nearly 60 percent.

By Steve Newborn

Q&A With USF President Judy Genshaft on Proposed State Budget Cuts
TAMPA (2012-2-15) - University of South Florida President Judy Genshaft is working feverishly to stop as much as a 60 percent proposed cut in state allocations.

By Carson Cooper

Senate Calls Off Prison Privatization

TAMPA (2012-2-15) - No more private prisons in Florida...at least not for now. State senators decided by two votes last night to kill a massive privatization program designed to reduce state prison costs by seven percent a year. Have all senators voted?

By Rick Stone

USF's Genshaft Optimistic About Fending Off Senate Budget Cuts

TAMPA (2012-2-14) - University of South Florida president Judy Genshaft sounded a positive note Tuesday night, after a flight to Tallahassee where she lobbied against a 58 percent proposed cut in USF's funding.

By Steve Newborn

Variety of Voices Sound off in Opposition to USF Budget Cuts

TAMPA (2012-2-14) - Since the Florida Senate unveiled a budget that could lead to over 100 million dollars in cuts to the University of South Florida, reaction has been fast and furious.

By Mark Schreiner

USF Students React to Proposed Budget Cuts

TAMPA (2012-2-14) - Various USF students react to the proposed budget cuts from the state senate.

By Yoselis Ramos

Fasano: Alexander Is a Bully and Senate Should Be Ashamed

TAMPA (2012-2-14) - Some Tampa Bay lawmakers are reacting with anger and defiance to a Senate proposal to cut 58 percent of state funding for the University of South Florida. Those proposed cuts are
more than twice as big as the proposed reductions for other universities, according to an analysis by USF.

By Scott Finn

Poverty, Homelessness Rising Sharply Among Florida Students

TAMPA (2012-2-14) - Since the economy collapsed in 2008, Florida’s student population has become poorer each year -- with almost all school districts in the state experiencing spikes in the number of kids who qualify for subsidized meals. Children have become homeless at alarming numbers as well.

By Mc Nelly Torres, Florida Center for Investigative Reporting

USF Trustees Vow to Fight Drastic Cut in University Funding

TAMPA (2012-2-14) - The University of South Florida Board of Trustees is launching a campaign to convince the Florida State Senate not to impose a budget that would cut 58 percent of USF’s funding. Other universities face cuts, but more in the 20 to 25 percent range.

By Craig Kopp

Wildlife Expedition Sees Danger, Signs of Recovery for Panther

CALOOSAHACHEE RIVER (2012-2-12) - The Florida Panther is fighting its way back from the brink of extinction, and members of the Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition are seeing signs of the panther in their travels.

By Carson Cooper and Scott Finn

How the "Robo-Signing" settlement affects Florida

TAMPA (2012-2-10) - A settlement has been reached that will provide a total of 25 billion dollars of relief to struggling homeowners. It will be paid by five of the country’s biggest banks for improperly handled foreclosures.

By Craig Kopp

Three Tuskegee Airmen Share Their Stories
POLK CITY (2012-2-9) - Three of the Tuskegee Airmen, the black pilots who helped break the military color barrier during World War II, shared their experiences Thursday at a public symposium at Fantasy of Flight in Polk City.

By Bobbie O'Brien

Pinellas Man Fights for His Right to Party

TALLAHASSEE (2012-2-9) - Under Florida law, you can get a ticket for blasting music out of your car speakers, but it is okay to crank up Rush Limbaugh or Terry Gross.

By Gina Jordan

No More No-Fault? Florida Legislature Tackles Auto Insurance Reform

TALLAHASSEE (2012-2-6) - Florida’s no-fault insurance requirement is set to undergo major changes this legislative session. Right now, Florida drivers are required to have $10,000 worth of personal injury protection, or PIP, for payout in a crash regardless of who is at fault.

By Gina Jordan

Volunteers Wanted for RNC Convention in August

TAMPA (2012-2-6) - When the Super Bowl was held in Tampa, event organizers depended on a corps of volunteers to greet out-of-town guests and help at events. The 2012 Tampa Bay Host Committee is following the same game plan only this time it’s for the Republican National Committee Convention this August in Tampa.

By Bobbie O'Brien

Where the GOP Candidates for President Stand on Education

TAMPA (2012-2-6) - As the Republican candidates for president arrive in Florida, they agree on one thing: The federal government should have a smaller role in education.

By John O'Connor

Environmentalists Battle Fertilizer Exemption Bill
ST. PETERSBURG (2012-2-3) - Bills now circulating in Tallahassee would block cities and counties from enacting bans on applying fertilizer during the summer rainy months - if those lawns are professional treated. A group of environmentalists offered what they say is proof the law won't work.

By Steve Newborn

Ninth Child in Two Years Dies in Hillsborough Kids Custody

TAMPA (2012-2-3) - When he was born, Gabrielle Crawford had the deck stacked against him. He fought multiple birth defects. His mother, Rosalee Crawford, struggled with substance abuse and mental illness.

By Scott Finn

Discussing the Python's Impact on the Everglades

TAMPA (2012-2-6) - A new study has some shocking news about wildlife in the Everglades. Raccoon and opossum sightings are down by 99 percent. Marsh rabbits and brown bunnies can't be found at all. Sightings of bobcats, foxes and deer are also way down.

By Carson Cooper and Steve Newborn

"Spies" Comes to Tampa Bay History Center

TAMPA (2012-2-3) - Tomorrow the Tampa Bay History Center opens its doors for day one of "Spies, Traitors, Saboteurs: Fear and Freedom in America." The exhibition is on loan from The International Spy Museum in Washington, DC.

By Susan Giles Wantuck

Health Secretary Sebelius Visits Tampa to Tout Federal Health Care Overhaul

TAMPA (2012-02-02) - President Obama's top health official is in Florida today. Secretary of Health and Human Services is touring the country to drum up support for the federal health care overhaul.

By Dalia Colón

St. Petersburg City Council Goes Forward with The "Lens"
TAMPA (2012-2-02) - The St. Petersburg city council agreed Thursday to move forward with the "Lens" design to replace the existing St. Petersburg Pier. But not before talking about the costs.

By Yoselis Ramos

Rays OF Sam Fuld Hosts Sports Camp for Diabetic Children

TAMPA (2012-2-2) - Children and teens with type 1 diabetes are getting a chance to play ball with a Tampa Bay Ray this weekend.

By Mark Schreiner

State Workers Keep Low Health Insurance Rates

TAMPA (2012-2-01) - State workers, including Gov. Rick Scott, won't have to pay more for health insurance next year, even though the cost for the state is expected to go up by 50 million dollars.

By Yoselis Ramos

Florida Town Faces Devastation if Prison Closes

MONTICELLO (2012-2-1) - What does a prison mean? In some places, it means everything. A rural north Florida community that went out on a limb to get its state prison is now about to lose it.

By Rick Stone

Romney Supporters Say Florida Strengthened the Candidate

TAMPA (2012-2-1) - The Florida primary, as rough and tumble as it got, made Mitt Romney a better candidate, according to Romney.

By Bobbie O'Brien

Why Mitt Romney Won in Florida

TAMPA (2012-1-31) - Mitt Romney won the Florida Presidential Preference Primary decisively. University of South Florida St. Petersburg Political Science Professor Seth McKee talks with WUSF's Craig Kopp about what Romney's win means for the primary race ahead - and why he won.
By Craig Kopp

Newt Gingrich’s Florida Concession Speech

ORLANDO (2012-1-31) - (AP)- Newt Gingrich says it's now clear it will be a two-person race for the GOP presidential nomination. The former House speaker, who finished well behind Mitt Romney in Tuesday's GOP primary, says that the Florida primary shows he will be the best candidate to oppose Romney.

Mitt Romney’s Victory Speech in Tampa

TAMPA (2012-1-31) - Thank you all. To the people of Florida tonight, thank you for this great victory. There are fewer candidates than when the race began, but the three gentlemen left are serious and able competitors. And I congratulate them on another hard-fought contest in this campaign.

Mitt Romney Wins Florida Primary

TAMPA (2012-01-31) - Mitt Romney routed Newt Gingrich in the Florida primary Tuesday night, rebounding from the previous week's defeat with a commanding victory and taking a major step toward the Republican presidential nomination. Despite the one-sided setback, Gingrich vowed to press on.

By Associated Press

Lawsuit Alleges Republican Primary Penalties Dilutes Hispanic Vote

TAMPA (2012-1-31) - A group representing Hispanic voters has sued the national Republican Party, saying its decision to penalize Florida for moving its primary to January has diluted the Hispanic vote.

By Steve Newborn

Attorney General Pam Bondi Supports Mitt Romney

TAMPA (2012-01-31) - Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi stood at Tampa’s intersection of Kennedy and Dale Mabry Highway holding a Mitt Romney placard on Tuesday.

By Yoselis Ramos

Florida Republicans Speak Out
TAMPA (2012-01-31) - It's decision day for GOP voters in Florida, and Mitt Romney has a double-digit lead in most polls. But Newt Gingrich supporters aren't giving up yet.

By Yoselis Ramos

I-4 Corridor Is the Highway to Presidential Political Heaven

TAMPA (2012-1-30) - Florida's primary is Tuesday and the Republican presidential candidates are focusing on the Interstate-4 corridor, called the "highway to presidential political heaven" because by some estimates, it's home to almost half of Florida's GOP voters.

By Bobbie O'Brien

Gingrich Sets Defiant Tone Day Before Election

TAMPA (2012-1-30) - Both Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich crisscrossed through Florida during a final push before Tuesday's presidential primary. Although most polls have Romney firmly ahead, Gingrich is vowing to push on.

By Steve Newborn

Romney Confident Before Florida Primary

DUNEDIN (2012-1-30) - Polls show former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney has a double-digit lead over former House Speaker Newt Gingrich going into the Republican primary. And at an afternoon rally in Dunedin in Pinellas County, Romney was confident -- and dismissive of Gingrich's chances in the home stretch.

By Anna Sale, WNYC

Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition Finds "Civilization" Hard to Escape

TAMPA (2012-1-30) - A group of wildlife conservationists are currently traversing the length of Florida by kayak, bicycle - and on foot. It's one thousand miles in one hundred days, and WUSF is keeping up with the Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition.

By Carson Cooper
Gingrich Banking on Support from Cain - and Maybe More

TAMPA (2012-1-30) - Newt Gingrich is campaigning hard in Florida, after recent polls have him trailing Mitt Romney in advance of Tuesday's primary. Gingrich is now banking on support from one - and possibly more - of his former rivals.

By Steve Newborn

U.S. Senators Assail State's New Voter Registration Law

TAMPA (2012-1-27) - Florida's new voter registration laws were put under a microscope by members of a Senate Judiciary Subcommittee, who met today in Tampa. And two U.S. Senators didn't like what they heard.

By Steve Newborn

Michelle Obama Touts "Mi Plato" Healthy Foods Campaign in Tampa

TAMPA (2012-1-26) - First Lady Michelle Obama visited a supermarket in West Tampa to kick off a Spanish-language version of her drive for healthy eating.

By Steve Newborn

How One Teenage Student in Fla. Became The First Martyr Of Cesar Chavez' Farm Workers

MIAMI (2012-1-26) - Students have been leading the way in the Occupy Movement — just part of a long tradition of young people leading protest movements in America. Forty years ago this week, a teenage freshman at New College of Florida became the first of five martyrs of Cesar Chavez’ United Farm Workers.

By Sarah Gonzalez

Older Adults in Florida Want to Hear about Social Security and Medicare

TAMPA (2012-01-26) - If there is a place to talk about Social Security and Medicare you would think it would be Florida. It has the largest percentage of adults age 65 and older in the nation. But an advocate for seniors says the issue is not being addressed.

By Yosells Ramos
Factchecking the GOP Debate in Tampa with PolitiFact

TAMPA (2012-01-24) - At the GOP debate in Tampa Monday night, Mitt Romney took off the gloves and went after Newt Gingrich for his leadership when he was House speaker and his work for mortgage-giant Freddie Mac.

By Scott Finn

Romney in Tampa: Time to Give the President the Pink Slip

TAMPA (2012-1-24) - Mitt Romney toured a manufacturing plant in Tampa today, fresh off his performance in last night’s GOP debate. Romney is setting his sights on tonight’s speech by President Obama.

By Steve Newborn

Gingrich Tones Down Attacks During GOP Debate

TAMPA (2012-1-24) - The remaining four candidates for the Republican presidential nomination debated last night at the University of South Florida in Tampa. WUSF's Steve Newborn interviews USF political science professor Seth McKee.

By Steve Newborn

Newt Gingrich Slams Romney at Mango Campaign Stop

TAMPA (2012-1-23) - Mitt Romney called fellow presidential candidate Newt Gingrich "erratic," with Gingrich responding that Romney is increasingly desperate as they both campaigned Monday in Tampa.

By Steve Newborn

UF Study Tallies What Lost Oranges is Costing Florida

TAMPA (2012-1-24) - When you drive through the rural parts of Florida, you might have seen it for yourself -- dead or dying orange trees. The culprit is a bacterial disease called Citrus Greening. A new University of Florida study tallies the economic cost.

By Yoselis Ramos
Discovering Ghana Through the Gilman International Scholarship

TAMPA (2012-1-24) - USF student and Gilman International Scholarship winner Farah Britto didn’t know what to expect when she traveled to the west African country of Ghana. What she discovered was a beautiful and culturally-rich place that she believes more U.S. students should visit.

By Yoselis Ramos

Sniping at GOP Debate Points One Student Toward Ron Paul

TAMPA (2012-1-23) - The two top contenders for the Republican nomination for president took several shots at each other during a debate at USF’s Tampa campus. But the attacks swung at least one student toward another candidate.

By Steve Newborn

Protestors Gather for the GOP Candidates Debate

TAMPA (2012-1-24) - While Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum, Ron Paul, and Newt Gingrinch were debating on stage, about 100 activists were protesting outside. The protestors represented Students for a Democratic Society, Occupy USF and Occupy Tampa, Fight Back Florida, and other groups.

By Yoselis Ramos

Florida Republicans: The Majority Lives Along I-4 Corridor

TAMPA (2012-1-23) - People tend to look at Florida from the outside and see it as a red state. But, the 2010 governor’s race, U.S. senate races and other statewide matches demonstrate otherwise – Florida is a two party competitive state unlike the other larger states – California, Texas and New York.

By Bobbie O'Brien

Gingrich Says "We Shouldn't Give (Unemployed) 99 Weeks To Do Nothing"

TAMPA (2012-01-23) - Saying “we shouldn’t give people 99 weeks to do nothing,” former House Speaker Newt Gingrich says all recipients of unemployment insurance should be required to sign up for a job training program.
By Scott Finn

Dissecting Gingrich's S.C. Win and What It Means for Florida

TAMPA (2012-1-23) - Newt Gingrich won big in Saturday's South Carolina Republican primary. WUSF's Carson Cooper sat down with StatelImpact Florida's John O'Connor, who covered the 2004 and 2008 presidential primaries for The State, South Carolina's most influential newspaper.

By John O'Connor

Factchecking GOP Primary Ads in Florida

TAMPA (2012-01-22) - With Newt Gingrich's win in South Carolina, Florida's GOP primary becomes just that much more important. So voters can expect a barrage of negative ads, many funded by Super PACs, to flood the airwaves.

By Scott Finn

Florida Unemployment in Single Digits

TAMPA (2011-1-20) - Governor Rick Scott jumped on a conference call with reporters to personally announce the Florida unemployment numbers for December. They dropped from 10 per cent to 9.9 per cent. That's the first time unemployment numbers in Florida hit single digits in two-and-a-half years.

By Craig Kopp

Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition Begins First Steps in 1,000-Mile Journey

EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK (2012-1-22) - One thousand miles in 100 days. That's the goal of a wildlife expedition that's calling attention to the need to connect the state's disjointed wild areas into a contiguous wildlife corridor. Today, the group is paddling through some of the most remote swamps in the Everglades.

By Steve Newborn

GOP Primary Debate Preparations
TAMPA (2011-1-20) - USF will be in the spotlight once again on Monday as it hosts the Republican Primary Debate. The University is co-sponsoring the debate with The Tampa Bay Times, The National Journal, NBC News and the Florida Council of 100.

By Yoselis Ramos

Panel Focuses on the "Lens" at St. Petersburg's Pier

ST. PETERSBURG (2012-1-20) - A five-member panel has come up with its recommendation to replace the upside-down pyramid at the end of St. Petersburg's Pier - the "Lens." It's the first step in a process that could transform the city's shoreline.

By Steve Newborn

The Future of Radio in the Digital Age

TAMPA (2011-1-18) - NPR is now offering on demand access to news, programs and stations with its new NPR app for Ford "Synch". In "Synch"-equipped cars, people can hook up their smart phone and operate the NPR News app by voice command.

By Craig Kopp

Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition Paddling the Wild Heart of Florida

EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK (2012-1-17) - Four wildlife conservationists are paddling, hiking and biking through the wild heart of Florida. Their mission: to call attention to the need to connect the state's disjointed wildlife preserves into a corridor stretching from the Everglades to the Okefenokee Swamp.

By Steve Newborn

First Land Donated for New Everglades Headwaters Refuge

TAMPA (2012-1-18) - The Secretary of the Interior was in eastern Polk County today, taking possession of the first parcel of land in a new wildlife refuge at the headwaters of the Everglades. The federal government wants to keep much of the area wild.

By Steve Newborn
Cannon: We Share Gov. Scott's Goal to Add $1 Billion to Education

TAMPA (2012-01-18) - House Speaker Dean Cannon is saying he shares Governor Scott's goal of adding $1 billion back into K-12 education funding. But he's not sure he agrees with the Governor about where to find the money.

By Scott Finn

Python Import Ban Announced, But Boa Constrictors Still Allowed

TAMPA (2012-1-17) - More than 1 million large constrictor snakes were imported into the United States between 1977 and 2007 according to a federal report. Now, federal officials want to ban four of those constrictor species from import and trade across state lines.

By Bobbie O'Brien

USFSP Students Take the Road to the White House

ST. PETERSBURG (2012-01-16) - Students in a USF Saint Petersburg political science class are learning first-hand how presidential campaigns are run.

By Mark Schreiner

Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition Embarks on 1,000-Mile Journey

TAMPA (2012-1-16) - A group of wildlife conservationists are camped at the southern tip of the Everglades, ready to take the first step in a thousand-mile journey up the central spine of Florida. Their mission: publicizing the need to connect the state's disjointed natural areas into a continuous wildlife corridor.

By Steve Newborn

Silver Star Recipient Talks About His PTSD at Free Symposium

SARASOTA (2012-1-13) - Sgt. Tommy Rieman was awarded a Silver Star for conspicuous gallantry and courage under fire while serving in Iraq. But, he will do something that takes as much courage this Saturday in Sarasota. He will discuss living with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

By Bobbie O'Brien
USF Art Museum Exhibit Unites Art & Nature

TAMPA (2012-01-12) - Nature and art meet in a new exhibit opening at the USF Contemporary Art Museum Friday, January 13. Mark Dion: Troubleshooting is a collection of drawings, prints and other pieces that examine the natural world around us, particularly here in Florida.

By Mark Schreiner

Mayor Bob Buckhorn Supports Water Ownership Bill

TAMPA (2012-01-12) - Mayor Bob Buckhorn and state representative Dana Young from Tampa have collaborated on a bill that would make drinking and reclaimed water property of the utilities handling it.

By Yoselis Ramos

Not all is Sunshine for Florida Oranges in Fungicide Scare

TAMPA (2012-1-12) - So just what would be the impact of the halting of imported citrus on that morning staple, Florida orange juice?

By Steve Newborn

2012 Session: Veterans Legislation to Track

TAMPA (2012-1-12) - Florida lawmakers are considering about 70 different bills that affect the state’s 1.6 million veterans.

By Bobbie O’Brien

Florida Secretary of State Resigns

TAMPA (2012-1-11) - With the Florida Presidential primary just weeks away, the man in charge of state elections is resigning. Secretary of State Kurt Browning gave the governor that news today. He will stay on until February the 17th -- through the primary.

By Craig Kopp
FBI Informants and Terrorism Arrests

TAMPA (2012-1-10) - The announcement of the arrest of a Pinellas Park man accused of plotting terrorism in the Tampa Bay area sent a little shiver through many people.

By Craig Kopp

Gov. Rick Scott's 2012 State of the State Address

TALLAHASSEE (2012-1-10) - Thank you. My fellow Floridians, President Haridopolos, Speaker Cannon, members of the Florida Senate and Florida House of Representatives, Chief Justice Canady, members of the Florida Supreme Court.

Education is the Focus Today in Tallahassee

TAMPA (2012-1-10) - State lawmakers return to Tallahassee today, with a lot on their list. The budget and the state's new political boundaries will take front and center. The governor plans to focus on finding new dollars for education.

By Carson Cooper and John O'Connor

High-Tech Medical Center Just Weeks Away

TAMPA (2012-1-9) - University of South Florida Health officials are just weeks away from opening a high-tech center in downtown Tampa that not only will bring new jobs to the area but they say it also will solidify Tampa Bay as a place for health care advances and innovations.

By Bobbie O'Brien

Sami Osmakac, Florida Terror Suspect, Left Video Trail on Internet

TAMPA (2011-1-9) - The Pinellas Park man charged with plotting terrorist attacks in Tampa Bay left a trail of violent rhetoric on the Internet. Sami Osmakac, 25, is being charged with plotting attacks on nightclubs and the Hillsborough County Sheriff's office, motivated by radical Islamic beliefs.

By Scott Finn

Former Yugoslav Citizen Implicated in Bomb Plot in Tampa
TAMPA (2012-1-9) - The FBI and the Department of Justice have arrested a naturalized citizen from the former Yugoslavia, Sami Osmakac, who lives in Pinellas Park. Authorities say they've been watching Osmakac for several months and the Muslim community has been cooperating with them.

By Susan Giles Wantuck and Steve Newborn

Florida Bill Would Establish a Purple Heart Day

TAMPA (2012-1-9) - The Florida Department of Veterans Affairs is supporting two modest bills for the 2012 legislative session that don't require any state money. If passed, House Bill 469 would designate August 7th as Purple Heart Day in Florida.

By Bobbie O'Brien

Santorum Florida Campaign

TAMPA (2012-1-6) - Jesse Biter of Sarasota is the Chair of the Santorum for President Campaign in Florida. WUSF's Craig Kopp caught up by phone with Biter in Hawaii, where he's on a long scheduled vacation, to talk about Florida campaign strategy in light of Santorum's close second place finish in the Iowa Caucuses.

By Craig Kopp

Q&A With Hillsborough Chairman for Mitt Romney

TAMPA (2012-1-6) - Once New Hampshire's primary wraps up Tuesday, all political eyes will turn to South Carolina and Florida. Mitt Romney's backers have the most money in the bank, having aired TV ads and establishing a state headquarters next to where the GOP will hold its national convention.

By Steve Newborn

Veterans Needed to Help Complete PTSD Study

TAMPA (2012-1-5) - The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have increased the need to better understand Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Researchers are trying to find a more reliable way to diagnose PTSD, but they need some help.

By Bobbie O'Brien
Occupy Tampa Occupies Working-Class West Tampa

TAMPA (2012-1-4) - While many of the Occupy Wall Street protestors nationwide have retreated from their tent cities due to police pressure or the cold, the protest continues in Tampa. We take a look at the new, less-upscale location for Occupy Tampa.

By Steve Newborn

Vegetable Farmers Keep Eye on Thermometer

TAMPA (2012-1-3) - Farmers throughout the state are weathering the season's first deep freeze. Growers are fearful that the low temperatures could damage some of the nation's winter vegetable crop.

By Steve Newborn

Off the Base: WUSF FM 2012 Murrow Entry Audio News Series

TAMPA (2012-1-1) - Off the Base is a special project of WUSF designed to spread understanding and make connections between the military and civilian communities.

By Bobbie O'Brien

Two Officers Slain in St. Petersburg

TAMPA (2012-01-01) - On January 24, two St. Petersburg police officers were killed as they apprehended a fugitive, Hydra Lacy Jr. WUSF responded with live coverage that day, and within hours compiled the timeline story that is the first story in the entry.

By Steve Newborn, Susan Giles Wantuck, Scott Finn, Carson Cooper, Dalia Colón

Off the Base: Telling the Stories of Military Families

TAMPA (2012-1-1) - Off the Base is a special project of WUSF designed to spread understanding and make connections between the military and civilian communities.

By Bobbie O'Brien
Florida Matters Quarterly report January 1 – March 31, 2011

Time aired: Tuesdays at 6:30 – 7 p.m. and Sundays at 7:30 – 8 a.m. on WUSF 89.7 FM; Friday at 7 – 7:30 p.m. on WSMR 89.1 FM

Florida Matters: Newsmaker Mayor Bob Buckhorn

March 20, 2012

Radio Description:

This week, Florida Matters brings you an exclusive interview with Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn. Host Carson Cooper traveled to Tampa City Hall to talk with the first-term mayor.

Buckhorn has been in office about a year. When he took over, the city was facing a $34 million deficit and is looking at a $30 million deficit for the coming fiscal year.

Yet, Buckhorn started his discussion about the budget with praise for his predecessor, Pam Iorio, who left the city with a $120 million rainy day fund, compared to the $20 million fund she inherited. Municipalities are highly dependent on property taxes for their main revenue and the recession and housing crisis have meant shrinking revenues and growing deficits.

"The property taxes and the value of our real estate has diminished so much that the amount of money that is coming into us has dropped 20 to 30 percent," Buckhorn said.

Buckhorn plans to bolster the budget with revenues from the city’s new red-light cameras, but he told WUSF that money was not the reason for installing the system.

"Our rationale for putting those red-light cameras in is because red-light running in this city and this state is an epidemic and people are dying, dying as a result of people busting red lights," Buckhorn said adding that he always counts to three after a light turns green before entering an intersection because he’s seen too many accidents.

During his tenure as mayor, Buckhorn has been vocal about the Tampa Bay Rays. He’s often said he won’t be the “boyfriend” who breaks up the marriage between the Rays and the City of St. Petersburg. However, he told WUSF, “I may be the pool guy though.”

Buckhorn stressed that he can’t interfere with the contract between St. Petersburg and the Rays. However, he also said that he other Tampa Bay leaders should be prepared if there was a split.

"I think we need to know what our options are," Buckhorn said. "I think we need to know what Tampa, Tampa Bay could bring to the table financially."

Speaking of finances, Buckhorn said the city will use a large portion of the $50 million from congress to hire, house and feed additional law enforcement officers to cover security for the Republican National Convention in August. Between the City of Tampa and Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office, Buckhorn estimates they can deploy about 1,000 law officers.
“We are having to hire 3,000 additional law enforcement personnel from all over the state to assist us with this,” Buckhorn said. He believes the convention will be a defining moment for the city.

“I want people to come downtown. I want people to enjoy this experience. I want young people to experience democracy at the street level,” Buckhorn said. “Fifteen thousand journalists will be here talking about something. I want them to talk about all that’s good about Tampa not talk about the inconveniences or not listen to whining. I want to hear Tampa tell the world what a great place this is to invest.”

Florida Matters: Newsmaker Jeff Vinik

March 13, 2012

Radio Description:

Jeff Vinik became the new owner of the Tampa Bay Lightning just over two years ago and quickly won over fans and local officials for what he’s done both on and off the ice. He bought the team with his own money and privately funded $40 million in renovations to the publicly-owned Tampa Bay Times Forum.

Yet when the assets manager first arrived in Tampa, sports writers did not get a good first impression.

“I was myself and I’m a pretty reserved person,” Vinik recently told Florida Matters’ host Carson Cooper. “I’m a very competitive person both with my asset management job as well as with the Lightning.”

Vinik’s competitive fire is fueled by his passion for hockey.

“Even though I’m a small owner in the Boston Red Sox actually and most of my Red Sox partners thought baseball was my favorite sport, by far hockey is the sport I love,” Vinik said, “the excitement of the game, the sounds of the game just every part of it.”

Yet, he believes it’s important to be bold and be willing to make the difficult decision for the betterment of an organization. So, Vinik didn’t settle on the Lightning and the Tampa Bay area without first studying all he could about sports management, hockey ownership and analyzing several different franchise opportunities.

He said the Tampa Bay Lightning came out on top because of its young talent, the welcoming community and the team had had prior success in leading the league in attendance.

Former Tampa Mayor Pam Iorio called Vinik an excellent example of “straightforward leadership” — someone who does not look to place blame, but instead looks to move forward.
“It’s all about people,” Vinik said. “I’ve been able to be fortunate enough to hire Tod Leiweke as CEO of the Lightning overseeing all the business aspects and Steve Yzerman as general manager overseeing the hockey.”

He said his job is to stay out of their way and focus on the long-term endeavor of making the organization “world class.” Vinik said he willingly invested his own money to renovate the Tampa Bay Times Forum because “it needed a soul” to build a brand and become a special place. He did not consider asking the city or county for money.

“The economy is tough down here, it’s been tough for a number of years.” Vinik said. “People are hurting and this is not the right time to go and ask for money for a private sports venture.”

He credits his dad and Harvard Business School for his leadership skills. “I learned there, hire the best people and do everything in a first class manner,” Vinik said.

When he bought the Lightning it was losing money. Those losses have shrunk, but he’s yet to make a profit.

“Things are going to work out fine as long as we can grow our brand, field a winning hockey team for the long term,” Vinik said. “Steve Yzerman will do that, I have no doubt, he’s a superstar.”

He isn’t just focused on the Lightning and events at the Forum, Vinik has talked with the City of Tampa about the Channelside District development. He said he’s not sure how he’ll get involved, but he cares about it because they are neighbors and he wants to help.

Vinik and his wife Penny have donated $10 million over five years to the Community Heroes program. The program, again the brainchild of Leiweke, recognizes an individual making a difference or a local charity at each Lightning home game and contributes $50,000.

Vinik is proud of the Community Heroes program and said he had three goals when he bought the Lightning: winning the Stanley Cup, continued excellence on the ice and making the community a better place.

The team owner also partnered with the University of South Florida to create a MBA program in Sports and Entertainment management.

“We think USF here can build one of the best MBA sports management programs in the country,” Vinik said. “We’ve got the right leader in there we’re going to try and help, given a little bit of money and a little bit of time.”

Since the announcement, Vinik said the phone has been ringing off the hook with calls from potential faculty and students.

Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition Nears Halfway Point of Statewide Journey
March 6, 2012

**Radio Description:**

The Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition is nearing the halfway mark of their trip up the length of Florida - 1,000 miles in 100 days. Their mission is to publicize the need to connect the state's disjointed wild areas into a continuous wildlife corridor. Carlton Ward Jr., Joe Guthrie, Mallory Lykes Dimmitt and Elam Stoltzfus discuss some of the surprises they found on the trip so far. Those include carrying 60-pound packs through the middle of palmetto patches - and how their preconceptions about the trip have jibed with the realities of traversing the length of Florida.

**A Conversation with USF President Judy Genshaft**

February 28, 2012

**Radio Description:**

In the last few weeks, USF President Judy Genshaft found herself in the fight of her career, taking on powerful lawmakers who wanted to slash USF’s budget and make USF’s branch campus in Lakeland into an independent school.

Florida Matters had a chance to talk with President Genshaft recently while she was in the middle of the budget fight. We’ve reported on that before.

But we also wanted to ask her about other issues -- rising college tuitions, USF’s membership in the Big East, and USF’s new medical facility.

The university is about to open a state-of-the-art medical training facility called the Center for Advanced Medical Learning and Simulation.

Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn calls it the most exciting thing to happen to downtown Tampa in 20 years - and Genshaft agrees.

She says the facility will draw thousands of doctors, nurses and other medical professionals to town for training. It also should lead to new inventions and spin-off jobs.

We also asked her about another difficult moment for her. It was two years ago, when USF Football coach Jim Leavitt was accused of striking one of his players and then trying to cover it up.

Last year, Leavitt settled a lawsuit against USF for almost $3 million. Genshaft said she really cannot talk about the case because of that settlement.

"But I can just tell you I have a lot of respect for Jim Leavitt. Personally, I like him very much. So, it was very sad for me personally to have to...go through the whole scenario."
When we talked with her, she was in the thick of a battle with Senate Budget chairman JD Alexander of Lake Wales. Most of those proposed cuts have now been scaled back. Genshaft says that's thanks to pressure from people in Tampa Bay.

Of course, there's more than one side to this debate. WUSF has an open invitation for Senator JD Alexander to join us for an interview.

Meanwhile, we are including in the show part of the Senate debate where Alexander and two other Senators talk about the fight over USF's budget and Polytechnic. We hear from Republican Senators Jack Latvala of Clearwater and Jim Norman of Tampa, But first, Senator Alexander describes why he lost faith in Genshaft's ability to help create Florida's 12th university in Lakeland.

**USF, JD Alexander, Polytechnic and the Budget Fight**

February 21, 2012

**Radio Description:**

What started as a fight over a new university in Polk County has blossomed into a battle over budget cuts to the University of South Florida. On this Florida Matters, we delve into the origin of the fight, and talk about how it may be resolved.

Senate Budget Chairman JD Alexander was once one of USF's biggest supporters. That's important, because Alexander has the power to direct millions of dollars toward USF...or, as we found out recently, to take it away.

"I have lost confidence in USF's leadership of that issue," he said recently.

That issue is the creation of what would be Florida's 12th university -- Florida Polytechnic -- in Alexander's home county, Polk County.

Alexander has said USF officials have dragged their feet on helping what is now a USF branch campus gain its independence.

This comes as Alexander's budget committee proposed budget cuts that USF said equal 58 percent of their state appropriation -- more than any other university.

USF President Jusy Genshaft immediately called the Tampa Bay Community to action:

"What is key is, we can change this. It is not a done deal," she said at a community meeting after the proposed Senate budget was announced.

Since then, Senate leaders have backed off some of those proposed cuts, but Dr. Genshaft says more work needs to be done to make sure USF is treated fairly in this year's budget.
Dr. Genshaft spoke recently with WUSF news director Scott Finn about how we got here, and her plan for steering USF through it.

Of course, Senator JD Alexander has a different take on the dispute over USF Polytechnic and the USF budget fight.

Alexander's dream is to create what's called a polytechnic university on land along I-4 outside Lakeland, with a focus on STEM degrees -- science, technology, engineering and math.

At first, Alexander was a big supporter of having the new Polytechnic university remain as part of USF, under the UC model.

But just three years later, Alexander was saying this at a Board of Governors meeting, where he asked for immediate independence for Polytechnic.

"All I can tell you is it has been tortuous...impossible to get the program arrays, to hire the faculty, to recruit the students," he said.

Alexander elaborated on the USF Poly split and the proposed cuts to USF recently with a group of reporters at the state Capitol.

Other universities are being cut as well, but USF officials say the Senate's version of the budget disproportionately affects them.

It's led to a movement of community leaders and students to try and reverse the cuts -- or at least make them more in-line with other universities. USF Student Body President Matthew Diaz led a group of student to Tallahassee recently and spoke to the Senate Budget Committee -- where he received a lecture from Senate Higher Education Appropriations Chairwoman Evelyn Lynn.

Diaz talked with Florida Matters about his experience in fighting proposed budget cuts to USF.

We've also been hearing from you on WUSF's Facebook page. John Hayes says, "(Senator) Alexander is acting like an elementary school bully, trying to use his position to "get even" with President Genshaft. Her opposition to his desire to make USF Polytechnic become its own, independent school, is no reason to decimate USF's budget."

Let us know what you think -- go to Facebook.com/WUSF and hit the like button. There's also lots more about the USF budget battle, including the most recent updates, on our website, WUSF.org.

The Closing and Privatizing of Florida's Prisons

February 15, 2012

Radio Description:
Florida lawmakers have shot down a bill that would have privatized prisons in the southern half of the state. But several prisons may be still be closed because there are more than 10,000 empty prison beds statewide.

One of those is Hillsborough Correctional Institution – a woman’s prison on the “hit” list. Backers of keeping the faith-and character-based prison open the state made a huge error because it did not consider the recidivism rate of prisoners. That could cost the state more money as inmates get out, commit new crimes and end up back behind bars.

Veterans and Unemployment: Finding Solutions

February 7, 2012

Radio Description:

In Florida, the unemployment rate among veterans, especially among the National Guard and Reservists, hovers above the national civilian average. This week on Florida Matters, we look at the hurdles veterans face when looking for work as well as initiatives aimed at encouraging employers to hire veterans.

Resources for Veterans looking for work:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Hiring Our Heroes, program has onsite job fairs including a Tampa Hiring Our Heroes event scheduled February 23rd from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Bayanihan Arts and Events Center, Tampa.

Employ Florida Veterans is an online portal promoted by Gov. Rick Scott in late January.

Hero 2 Hired, the Military Spouse Job Board and the Department of Labor Gold Card program are among the links available on the White House Veterans page.

Joining Forces -- includes a national resource directory of employers looking to hire veterans, a military spouse board among other links.

Veteran Employment - a collaborative website between veterans and Monster.com.

G.I. Jobs - a guide to "post-military" success with tips on resumes, interviewing and dressing for success.

Florida National Guard Career Connections - information on job fairs, job banks and job searches of Florida government positions.

Florida One-Stop Career Centers - links and addresses to centers statewide.

Veterans Gold Card - employment opportunities for post 9/11 era veterans.
Resources for Employers looking to hire veterans:

ESGR Employer Resource Guide

Employer Sample HR Policy

Florida Employer Resources - tips on recruiting qualified candidates.

No Choice: Florida Charter Schools and Students with Disabilities

January 31, 2012

Radio Description:

Charter schools are supposed to accept students regardless of ability...but in Florida, many are not.

Charter schools are designed to be an alternative for students who aren’t happy with their neighborhood school. But an investigation by StateImpact Florida and the Miami Herald found that charter schools aren’t an option for many students with severe disabilities.

Only 14 percent of charter schools serve kids with severe disabilities, compared to half of traditional public schools.

StateImpact Florida reporters Sarah Gonzalez and John O’Connor tell us the story behind their investigation, and the impact it is having.

We also talk with Kathleen McGrory of the Miami Herald. She and reporter Scott Hiaasen published “Cashing in on Kids,” a six-month investigation into charter schools.

Florida’s GOP Primary: What to Expect

January 24, 2012

Radio Description:

In the final days before the Florida GOP primary, and we’re speaking with top political experts about what to expect, and what it all means.

Joining us is Adam Smith, political editor of the Tampa Bay Times, GOP political consultant Mark Proctor, and USF political scientist Susan MacManus.

Redistricting 2012: Who Will Dominate Florida’s Politics?

January 17, 2012
Radio Description:

It happens every ten years, regular as clockwork. It’s when Florida lawmakers redraw the political boundaries that determine who you get to vote for. They’re doing it right now in Tallahassee.

On this special Florida Matters, WUSF in Tampa and WMFE in Orlando are working together to answer the question, what does redistricting mean to you?

Gov. Rick Scott's 2012 State of the State Address

January 10, 2012

Radio Description:

Governor Rick Scott says Florida's economy is on the mend and promised to put $1 billion back into education in his 2012 State of the State Address. Hear part of his address, along with analysis from USF political science professor Seth McKee and the Democratic response from Senate Minority Leader Nan Rich.

UNIVERSITY BEAT FIRST QUARTER 2012

University Beat reports run on WUSF 89.7 FM every Tuesday at approximately 6:35 am and 8:35 am and every Thursday at approximately 5:45 pm.

It also runs every Friday on WSMR 89.1 FM every Friday at about 7:30 pm. Each report is between two and a half minutes and three and a half minutes in length.

University Beat: Morsani Medical School (week of January 2, 2012)

By Mark Schreiner

A look at the USF Morsani College of Medicine, why it's changing its name and what it means for USF Health's future. (Medicine, Business, Education)

University Beat: Marshall Scholar (week of January 9, 2012)

By Mark Schreiner
Meet Jean Weatherwax, the first USF Marshall Scholarship ever, who will soon study electrical engineering at one of England’s premier schools. (Education, Science)

**University Beat: Electric Cars** (week of January 16, 2012)
By Mark Schreiner
USF is plugging into the future with the installation of the first electric vehicle charging stations on the Tampa campus. (Environment, Science)

**University Beat: STEM Research Part 1** (week of January 23, 2012)
By Mark Schreiner
First part of a look at USF’s STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) efforts, beginning with a National Science Foundation-funded study that’s examining how STEM education can help students go from high school to community college to high-tech jobs. (Science, Education, Children)

**University Beat: STEM Research Part 2** (week of January 30, 2012)
By Mark Schreiner
Second part of a look at USF’s STEM efforts, this time examining USF efforts to develop a new education program aimed at creating strong STEM teachers for middle schools. (Science, Education, Children)

**University Beat: Natural Art Exhibit** (week of February 6, 2012)
By Mark Schreiner
A profile of Mark Dion and his wildlife art, which is decidedly unlike anything else you’ll see in an art museum. (Arts, Environment, Education)

**University Beat: Engineering Scholarships** (week of February 13, 2012)
By Mark Schreiner
A look at how corporate and individual gifts are helping USF Engineering students afford their education. (Education, Science, Economy)