



# **NEWS**

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## **LOCAL UNIVERSITY PLUMBER IS HONORED**

**GAINESVILLE** — University of Florida plumber, Shane Rigdon has been selected as a recipient of a 2006 Prudential Financial Davis Productivity Award for going above and beyond the call of duty, working smarter, and saving the University more than \$24,960.00 in a year.

Rigdon, a plumber at the University's Water Department, built a portable, collapsible testing unit for safety showers that allows one instead of two people to do preventive maintenance. The showers, mostly in laboratories, are for emergency treatment of the eyes or body of a person exposed to injurious materials. The University has approximately 100 safety showers on campus. Preventive testing is conducted once-a-month, although there has not been an accident requiring the showers' use in more than five years.

Rigdon's handy device frees an additional person for emergencies and urgent work orders. Rigdon used his own initiative to build a plastic cone water-diverter that funnels shower spray into a 55-gallon barrel that rolls on a four-wheel dolly and adjusts to varying showerhead heights.

Steve Middleton, University maintenance construction superintendent, praised Rigdon. "This safety shower testing device is low tech and made entirely from parts on hand. It's a very clever idea — it can be made right in the shop and used by any state agency. Shane took initiative and creativity beyond what would normally be expected."

Rigdon received a Notable Individual Award and \$250 for his achievement.

"Mr. Rigdon's innovation brings added efficiency and value to state government and Florida taxpayers," said Dominic M. Calabro, President and CEO of Florida TaxWatch. "This unique achievement was developed by someone on the inside who wanted to improve the system - not by an outside sales company."

The Prudential Financial Davis Productivity Awards program is a major government improvement initiative sponsored by Florida TaxWatch, The Florida Council of 100 and the State of Florida. In its 18<sup>th</sup> year, the program recognizes and rewards state employees who clearly exceed their job descriptions and performance expectations in ways that improve service delivery and save money for Florida taxpayers.

The 2006 awards competition honored 555 winners across Florida for innovations and productivity improvements worth \$340 million in cost savings, cost avoidances, and increased revenue for state government. Since 1989, more than 12,000 individuals, teams, work units, and partnerships have been honored for saving the state \$5.3 billion.

Rigdon's awards is one of 42 to individual state employees and teams in north central Florida recognized for cost savings in the course of their jobs. Others include:

► The ten-member Elmwood Interdisciplinary Team at Tacachale-Facility 8 Agency for Persons with Disabilities in Gainesville helped a man with developmental disabilities realize his dream of living in his own apartment and seek gainful employment.

"He went from a group-living situation in a state institution with nine other people, to living independently with much more privacy and control over his own schedule and life," said Ken McDonald, Assistant Superintendent at Tacachale. "The team spent a lot of time helping him through a difficult adjustment period. He has since met a woman who lives in the apartment complex and has plans to get married."

The annual cost of care for a bed at Tacachale is \$150,529.80. The team effort saved the state \$104,651 in a year. The approach can easily be adapted and used by other state facilities. Team members are Zvia McCormick, Holli Rutledge, Cindy Boyd, Karen Purpura, Barbara Griffin, Leonard Davis, Edward Weiser, Paul Redline, Sherry Wojack, and Ronald Mullis.

► Barbara Lemley, Family Support Worker with the Department of Children and Families in Lake City, who with her efforts, determination, and creativity saved her unit over \$14,000 in overtime expense and helped bring her work unit from the bottom of the rankings to near the top of the north central Florida district.

"Barbara does whatever it takes to help her coworkers, from chasing runaways down the street in the middle of the night to washing out lice to accessing tax rolls to find a client or caregiver," said Child Protection Investigation Supervisor, Karen Page. Barbara has never heard the words "it's not my job."

Ironically, Lemley's position as a part-time, non-career service worker was eliminated because of budgetary limitations. The department hopes to get her back as a full-time career service worker once the new budget takes effect.

► The two-member Indigent Care Team of the Putnam County Health Department (CHD) in Palatka, Becky Slobodian and Jackie Allison, developed a program that saved the taxpayers more than \$17,000 in prescription and over-the-counter medications last year alone. The team was voluntary, non-mandated, and received no funding from general revenue or grants.

"Becky and Jackie would search until they found sources to supply medications to citizens with medical needs, often prescriptions in-hand, and no ability to pay or other financial resources, such as insurance. Most frequently the sources were pharmaceutical companies, and as a last resort, funds maintained by the (CHD) Indigent Drug Program," said Jim Elliott, Quality Insurance Director at CHD.

In addition to the medication savings, the team is credited with substantial savings through innovative fund-raising approaches, such as "wear-jeans-to-work-days," selling choice parking spaces, sponsoring hot dog days, holding car-washes, and soliciting individual and corporate donations. Monies raised provided infant and child car seats, medical testing, and even temporary rent assistance.

A luncheon honoring area winners will be held Tuesday, June 13th at the Best Western Gateway Grand in Gainesville. The complete list of winners can be viewed at [www.floridataxwatch.org](http://www.floridataxwatch.org).



Shane Rigdon, University of Florida plumber

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[Click Here to View the 2006 Prudential Financial Davis Productivity Awards magazine](#)

**MEDIA NOTE: The Awards Ceremony will take place at the Best Western Gateway Grand, 4200 NW 97<sup>th</sup> Blvd. from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Presenting the awards will be Michael Gracy from Prudential Financial and Clarissa Dunlap, director of the Prudential Financial Davis Productivity Awards.**

Florida TaxWatch is a private, non-profit, non-partisan research institute that over its 25 year history has become widely recognized as the watchdog of citizens' hard-earned tax dollars. Our mission is to provide the citizens of Florida and public officials with high quality, independent research and education on government revenues, expenditures, taxation, public policies and programs and to increase the productivity and accountability of Florida Government. On the web at [www.floridataxwatch.org](http://www.floridataxwatch.org)