



**State Attorney**  
**18th Judicial Circuit**  
Brevard and Seminole County



# The Monthly Brief

Volume 13 Issue 10

October 2025

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## How to avoid crooks during Medicare open enrollment

Watch out for scammers who target seniors' money and information during Medicare's open-enrollment period, Oct. 15-Dec. 7.

Some impersonate Medicare and contact you unexpectedly.

They'll demand your Medicare number or Social Security number to "update" records or avoid benefit cancellation. Or say you need a new Medicare card and ask for numbers from your Medicare card, bank account, or credit card.

But real Medicare representatives won't call, text, or email you out of the blue to ask for your numbers or a payment, federal officials warn. Real Medicare cards are free and mailed to you automatically.

The Federal Trade Commission shares two ways to protect yourself from such Medicare scams:

**Ignore unexpected calls from anyone who demands you share Medicare, personal, or financial information.**

Medicare will only ask you to verify information if *you* contact *them* first, and they won't try to sell you anything or tell you to pay for your Medicare card. Only scammers do that.

**Don't rely on your caller ID.**

It might show Medicare's name or phone number, but caller ID can be faked. To check it out, hang up and call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

**Get general Medicare insurance help**

Call Florida's Senior Medicare Patrol:  
**1-800-963-5337**

## Hurricane fraud watch: Beware FEMA-aid scams

After hurricanes and other disasters, scammers posing as FEMA officials target property owners to steal money and personal data.

### How they work

- **Door-to-door:** Imposters claim to be inspectors, demanding upfront cash for "home assessments" or debris removal.
- **Phone/text/email:** Unsolicited contacts request Social Security numbers, banking details, or payments for "applications" or "grants."
- **Identity theft:** Thieves use stolen info to file fraudulent FEMA claims, diverting aid to themselves.



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### Red flags to watch for

- **Unsolicited contact:** FEMA won't call, text, or visit before you apply directly to the agency for aid. Beware of anyone claiming you're "pre-approved" for aid.
- **Payment demands:** Scammers may request cash, gift cards, or wire transfers for "inspections" or "grants." But FEMA services are free.
- **Pressure tactics:** Urgency to act fast or share your Social Security numbers or banking info.
- **Iffy credentials:** No FEMA badge? Just a shirt or logo? Don't trust them.

### Protect yourself

- Apply for aid only at **DisasterAssistance.gov** or call **800-621-3362**.
- Verify phone contacts by hanging up and calling FEMA directly.
- Ask for photo ID badges from anyone who contacts you in person.
- Never share sensitive info or pay fees. Report suspicious, unsolicited letters.
- Monitor your credit at **IdentityTheft.gov**.
- Report fraud to FEMA's Fraud Hotline: **866-720-5721**.

## How well have you planned for a hurricane?

Among the answers in an easy online guide at **FloridaDisater.org**:

- Know if you live in an evacuation zone
- How to reinforce your home
- The link to enroll in the Special Needs Registry



# Law & Order News



## Habitual thief gets life after truck burglary in Port St. John

A career burglar and car thief who single-handedly worsened crime statistics in northern Brevard County has been sentenced to natural life in prison.

A jury convicted WILFORD E. McCLOUD JR., 43, in July of armed car burglary and grand theft of a firearm stemming from a truck break-in in Port St. John in 2022. Prosecutors Jennifer Mostert and Andrew Joy successfully argued at his sentencing Sept. 10 that McCloud should be sentenced as a Habitual Offender and Prison Releasee Reoffender – statuses that qualified him for longer mandatory prison terms.

McCloud was such a prolific offender, police have said, that local property-crime statistics dropped during times when McCloud was incarcerated over the past 25 years and rose again when he was released. His record included 28 convictions including burglary, petit theft, grand theft, and grand theft-motor vehicle.



“This is all he’s ever done – menace every community he’s ever been in,” Mostert said.

On Feb. 22, 2022, Brevard County sheriff’s deputies pulled McCloud over for riding a purple Huffy women’s bicycle without a light on Grissom Parkway near Perimeter Road and subsequently arrested him for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. The black 9 mm Glock matched a handgun that was reported stolen from a Ford pickup truck parked in its owner’s driveway in Port St. John.

## Seminole Co. prosecutors refute ‘passion’ killing, convict Casselberry man for stabbing girlfriend in apartment near kids

A Casselberry man who stabbed his girlfriend, left her body on their bedroom floor, then drove their children to school has been convicted of murder.

FAREL TORRES, 38, killed Vanessa Santiago with a steak knife in their apartment off S.R. 436 and Winter Woods Boulevard on May 29, 2024. Hours later, a seemingly hysterical Torres called police and told dispatchers, “I stabbed her in the head ... I stabbed her ‘cause I was mad.”

At trial, Seminole County prosecutors Domenick Leo, Jacob Polk and Sarah Mian made the case that Torres’ tears were part of an act.

Torres told Casselberry Police he recklessly killed Santiago during an argument, and he told jurors it was in a fit of passion – possible reasons for manslaughter charges instead of murder. But prosecutors presented evidence that Torres maliciously killed Santiago and seemed to prepare for it by retrieving the knife from a kitchen drawer and disabling a security camera in the bedroom.

Jurors absorbed video from elsewhere in the apartment that showed Torres was desperate and angry at Santiago, 34, who had reported him to police once before for domestic violence. Santiago was breaking up with him and kicking him out of the apartment.

“Abuse is not about love, abuse is about control, and we successfully took that control away from the defendant,” Mian said. Sentencing will be Nov. 5.



## Driver guilty of DUI manslaughter for hitting Cape Canaveral bicyclist

A man who hit and killed a bicyclist in Cape Canaveral while driving drunk has been convicted of DUI Manslaughter after seven years of legal maneuvering.

A Brevard County Jury returned a guilty verdict Sept. 29 against GLENN W. BRIMMER, 46, following a three-week trial in Viera. Brimmer, of Ocoee, drank at the Cocoa Beach Pier the evening of March 2, 2018, before driving his Hyundai Veloster north on S.R. A1A and striking cyclist John D. Perrin, 66.

At trial, Assistant State Attorneys Greg Hansen and Bernadette Serafinowicz presented evidence including blood samples that Brimmer voluntarily submitted to that revealed a blood-alcohol content level of .23, more than twice the state’s legal limit.

Jurors also heard an audio recording of Brimmer’s field sobriety exercises, in which Brimmer was heard laughing and saying, “Let’s do it!” – then having trouble following sheriff’s deputies’ instructions.

“Mr. Perrin was a human being who didn’t deserve his untimely death,” ASA Serafinowicz said. “Justice for the victim in this case was long overdue.” Sentencing was set for Oct. 17.