

Immigrant trust in police erodes

Fear about the deportation crackdown is straining communities’ ties with local law enforcement.

BY JUAN CARLOS CHAVEZ
Times Staff Writer

When immigrant families in parts of Hillsborough County need help, many turn to Ana Lamb, a longtime advocate in Wimauma. This year, the calls she gets are filled with fear, she said. Many families are so afraid of drawing attention that they avoid reaching out to authorities.

“This happens even in serious situations that could have been resolved, or even prevented, with a direct call to the sheriff or police,”

said Lamb. “They don’t do it. Why? Because the fear is stronger than urgency.”

Trust between local immigrant communities and law enforcement agencies has eroded due to changes in state and federal immigration policy, according to advocates and community leaders who hear these concerns firsthand.

Programs that involve local police assisting immigration authorities have fueled those fears. Many of those arrested have no

criminal history, raising concerns that even a call for help could make things worse.

Florida has more of those law enforcement partnerships than any other state, with 318 statewide, according to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The Rev. Andy Oliver, of Allendale United Methodist Church in St. Petersburg, said trust between the community and law enforcement has withered in recent months. **See TRUST, 3A**



The Unidos Mexicanos de la Florida group meets in a public park across the street from El Ranchito De Pepe grocery store Aug. 11 in Clearwater. (CHRIS URSO | Times)



Volunteer Robin Hummel, right, takes Yulissa for a walk on Aug. 1 at Hillsborough County’s Pet Resource Center on Falkenburg Road in Tampa. At the center, four out of seven kennels lack air conditioning. (Photos by DOUGLAS R. CLIFFORD | Times)

Hillsborough animal shelter is without AC. Why it is not rare

During a brutal heat wave at the end of July, the county made a plea to the public to help cool about 260 dogs. A flood of donations came in, and fosters stepped up.

BY MICHAELA MULLIGAN
Times Staff Writer

TAMPA — Michelle Wludyka walked up and down the kennels, jotting down names.

There was Bubbaque, the black Labrador retriever. Chungus, the American Staffordshire terrier with brown patches around his eyes. And Waluigi, the aging Plott hound.

Wludyka, the rescue foster coordinator for Hillsborough County Pet Resource Center, penciled a star next to the names of the dogs that appeared to struggle most in the heat — evidenced by excessive panting or lethargy.

“Can you write down Ozzy? I just hosed him down,” said Chelsea Waldeck, the division director for the center.

Ozzy is a 2-year-old American pit bull terrier. He arrived as a stray at the center on July 26, just before unprecedented temperatures began in Tampa.

He largely eats, sleeps and lives with no air conditioning, as do thousands of other dogs that come into the shelter each year.

Dealing with the summer heat at the center is usually difficult, but the last week of July made it nearly unbearable.

At Hillsborough County Pet Resource Center, four out of seven kennels lack air conditioning. And during the hottest week of the year, one of the air-conditioned kennels was closed as staff repaired the roof at the Falkenburg Road location.

To make matters worse, the center was caring for about 260 dogs — around 80 more than it was built to handle — so there wasn’t much cool space left for the pups trying to escape the heat.



On July 29, the shelter made a plea to the public: Take a dog, even just for a day, to give the animals a break from scorching temperatures.

A flood of public responses followed: Amazon truck-loads of donations. Brothcicles and ice pops. An influx of adoptions and fosters.

But a lingering question remained: Why does a county shelter that houses animals not have full AC in Florida, a state known for its brutal heat waves?

“I think it kind of shocked everybody that we didn’t have air conditioning,” Waldeck said. “It’s always been this way.” **See HEAT, 4A**

Hillsborough County Pet Resource Center division director Chelsea Waldeck offers water to Ozzy, a dog available for adoption, inside one of the shelter’s non-air-conditioned kennels. Dealing with the summer heat at the center is usually difficult.

Tampa Bay is a hot spot for Israeli companies

A local accelerator has attracted dozens of their businesses to Florida. Not everyone approves.

BY SHAUNA MUCKLE
Times Staff Writer

As the final notes of “The Star-Spangled Banner” faded, an Israeli flag rippled across the screen.

Israel’s national anthem rang out next among a hushed crowd. Then came footage of soldiers creeping behind a four-legged drone and tanks rolling across a desert carrying black boxes emblazoned with a golden “X.” Republican Jay Collins, recently appointed as Gov. Ron DeSantis’ No. 2, sat next to Tampa Mayor Jane Castor, a Democrat, for a presentation.

Hillsborough County leaders across the political spectrum had gathered near Seffner to tout the arrival of Xtend, a company that manufactures drones for military operations. Drones equipped with explosives have aided Israeli army soldiers in Gaza, CEO and co-founder Aviv Shapira told the Wall Street Journal in December 2023. Xtend’s drones have raised ethical concerns about their use of artificial intelligence algorithms to pinpoint targets, The New York Times reported in April.

The ribbon-cutting event for Xtend in early July marks another success for the Florida-Israel Business Accelerator, which since 2017 has attracted Israeli tech companies seeking to expand into the U.S. to Florida. Forty-six businesses now have a presence across the state, with 17 setting up shop in **See ISRAEL, 2A**

Storms

8 a.m. Noon 4 p.m. 8 p.m.



80° 90° 92° 89°

20% chance of rain

More, back page of Sports

INDEX

Baylink	F
Classified	F
Local & State	B
Obituaries	12A
Viewpoints	10A
Sports	C
TBT	TB

Vol. 142 No. 27
© Times Publishing Co.



7 89067 19943 7