

# MAKING

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workers are more ethical because they work harder, however, keep in mind the comment of author Barbara Ehrenreich, a Florida Keys resident who writes about working class and poor people in the book, "Nickled and Dimed."

"Personally," she notes, "I have nothing against work, particularly when performed, quietly and unobtrusively, by someone else. I just don't think it's an appropriate subject for an ethic."

Maybe not, but Pete Winton points out that skill and judgment, if not work ethic, have something to do with the value of highly paid leaders, too.

"One of the hardest things at this level is hiring the right people," he says. "You shouldn't — you couldn't — do everything. So you try not to replicate yourself, you try to hire those who have other skills, and that's hard to do."

Still, many may find it difficult to feel sorry for these leaders. In a county where the median household income is now about \$40,300, and where males average roughly \$31,250 with females lagging at \$24,400, none of the officials listed below make less than \$100,000 per year, except elected officials (the politicians, not the 20th judicial circuit court judges, 50 of them, who make well over \$100,000). And some top dogs make much more than \$100,000.

For some, benefits include generous monthly car allowances or cars, thorough health insurance packages, significant pension plans and the like.

In return for all that, these hardworking men (the top public appointees in Lee County are almost universally men) either manage or help to manage large, complex organizations that provide a comfortable life: fire and police protec-

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tion, hospital care, a responsible justice system, schools for our children, institutions of higher education for our new leaders, decent roads, good water and additional utilities, plus hundreds of others.

They're careerists, the kind, perhaps, who led feminist Gloria Steinem to note, "I have yet to hear a man ask for advice on how to combine marriage and a career."

They get paid well, sometimes through complex systems of weights and measures, if you will. For example, the state legislature determines the salaries of all 10 elected officials in the county (and in all 66 other Florida counties), by comparing the number of people living here, the number of people arriving here annually, and the pay of state government careerists. From that unpredictable mix, they determine a salary.

In cities such as Cape Coral, voter apathy hurts the incomes of elected officials, who are paid according to the number of people who register to vote: 20 cents a voter for the mayor, and 17 cents for each council member. As you'll see, they don't make much.

## What they make

- >> President **George W. Bush**: \$400,000
- >> Vice President **Dick Cheney**: \$208,100
- >> Florida Governor **Charlie Crist**: \$133,000
- >> Lt. Governor **Jeff Kottkamp**: \$127,400

### LEE MEMORIAL HEALTH SYSTEMS:

- >> **Jim Nathan**, president and chief executive officer: \$554,100
- >> **John Wiest**, chief financial officer: \$351,915
- >> **Mary McGillicuddy**, chief legal officer: \$216,200
- >> **Bob Simpson**, president and CEO of LeeSar, Inc.: \$225,200

### LEE COUNTY APPOINTED OFFICIALS

- >> **Don Stilwell**, county manager: \$237,000
- >> **David Owen**, county attorney: \$205,500
- >> **William Hammond**, deputy county manager: \$148,500
- >> **Diana Parker**, chief hearing examiner: \$142,612
- >> **James Lavender**, director of public works: \$139,500
- >> **Holly Schwartz**, assistant county manager: \$133,500
- >> **Pete Winton**, assistant county manager: \$121,000

### LEE COUNTY APPOINTED OR ELECTED OFFICIALS

- >> **Bob Ball**, executive director, Lee County Port Authority: \$210,000
- >> **T. Wayne Gale**, Lee County Mosquito Control director: \$155,000
- >> **Mike Scott**, sheriff (elected): \$148,000
- >> **Charlie Green**, Clerk of Courts (elected): \$139,500
- >> **Cathy Curtis**, tax collector (elected): \$139,500
- >> **Ken Wilkinson**, property appraiser (elected): \$139,500
- >> **Charles Ferrante**, chief deputy sheriff: \$138,900

- >> **Sharon L. Harrington**, supervisor of elections (elected): \$120,500
- Commissioners (5, elected): \$82,785.

### EDUCATION

- >> **Kenneth Walker**, Edison College district president: \$225,000
- >> **Richard Peggnetter**, Florida Gulf Coast University president, \$250,000
- >> **James Browder**, Lee County superintendent of schools: \$159,700

### 20th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

- >> **Judges (50)**: \$145,000
- >> **Steve Russell**, state attorney: \$153,000

### POLICE CHIEFS

- >> **Hilton Daniels**, chief, Fort Myers: \$125,000
- >> **Robert Petrovitch**, chief, Cape Coral: \$122,000

### FIRE CHIEFS

- >> **Kenny Dobson**, chief, Fort Myers: \$110,200
- >> **Bill Van Helden**, chief, Cape Coral: \$121,300
- >> **Donald Adams**, chief, Lehigh Acres Fire District: \$122,000
- >> **Nat Ippolito**, chief, San Carlos Park Fire District: \$99,500

### FORT MYERS ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS

- >> **Jim Humphrey**, mayor: \$84,094
- >> **Anthony Shoemaker**, city manager: \$125,000
- >> **City council members**: \$32,600

### CAPE CORAL ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS:

- >> **Eric Feichthaler**, mayor: \$19,100
- >> **Council members**: \$16,300
- >> **Terry Stewart**, city manager: \$157,600

At Lee Memorial Health System, where Jim Nathan, president and CEO, is the highest paid leader of any government or nonprofit organization in the region, his salary is maintained neatly at the 50th percentile of pay for those in similar occupations, nationwide. That figure — greater than the salaries of the president and vice president of the United States — is determined by something called the "Watson-Wyatt Worldwide Executive Compensation Market Analysis," which surveys the national and southeast market for organizations of similar size.

Nathan turned down a contract offered by the hospital board that would have paid him much more than the \$544,100 he currently earns.

"The time came when (his contract) was going to be on the table, and he said, 'Linda, I don't want that up for consideration — I don't even want to discuss it,'" recalls Linda Brown, a Hospital Board member who chaired the board last year.

"He felt the hospital system had enough challenges, and he did not want or need the money, but we felt it was important to keep him on a par with his colleagues, so we passed a policy to keep him at the 50th percentile, and not let him drop too far behind. And there were no bonuses or special considerations for him.

"Being a public organization, the record is public, and it's a horrible thing for a person to go through, to have their salary discussed in the media — for Jim it's the most awful thing."

Nathan is married to his job. "The only time Jim is not working is when he's sleeping," says Linda Hammer, his executive assistant.

Fort Myers Police Chief Hilton Daniels, who gets paid a lot less than Nathan, is in the same boat, like Lee County Sheriff Mike Scott, and many others, who are also job grooms, wedded to the work.

"The job is 24/7," Daniels says. "I never have any down time, no personal time. Even if I go on vacation, I always have to be ready to come back to work."

And the tensions weigh in, too. "The entire time we were working on the Midfield extension (at Southwest Flor-

ida International Airport), I don't think he ever slept well or stopped worrying," says Barbara Anne Urrutia, a Port Authority spokeswoman describing her boss, Bob Ball, the executive director of the Lee County Port Authority, who has also had to manage all the changes following 9/11.

Meanwhile way out east in Lehigh Acres, Fire Chief Donald Adams is beset by a host of problems — his tradeoff for a choice salary.

"We face multiple problems: the level of service we have to offer, the tremendous growth. People are reluctant to increase taxes, but they're demanding a high level of service, so it's politics. Then we have these tremendous wildfires. We don't have anything available to protect citizens when they hit.


"And we have to juggle and bounce other aspects of operations — for example, we also run an ambulance service. We'll be on call, then another call comes in, and another comes in...the level of service is difficult to keep up. It's an emergency. Growth is so rapid we're behind by 10 years, and we're trying to play catch up. And in the face of all that, we've got tax reform knocking at the door."

So probably these salaries aren't entirely without merit, suggests Joseph Paterno, executive director of the Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board, who is under fire for his own salary — \$176,000 — and financial bungling that has left his agency with a \$485,000 shortfall.

"If you take a look at the budget of Lee County, and compare that to a business in the private sector, how much will that CEO, that person running the billion-dollar corporation, be making? Probably a lot more than somebody in the public sector."

Sure enough. In Lee, where the capital and operating budgets together amount to more than \$2 billion, the county manager, Don Stilwell, probably makes far less than a CEO in a similarly-sized private business.

On the other hand, he makes more than Gov. Charlie Crist, who oversees a \$72 billion state budget. So we probably won't hear any complaints. ■



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