

Brother of man fatally shot sorry for injuring deputy

18-year-old Francisco Pablo also regrets drinking and driving



Miguel Pablo, right, and his wife, Angelina Francisco, mourn the loss of their son, Miguel Pablo, at their home in Indiantown on Monday. Pablo, 21, was fatally shot by a Martin County Sheriff's Office deputy on Sunday during a traffic stop at the Treasure Coast Square mall in Jensen Beach.

BY MEGAN V. WINSLOW
megan.winslow@scripps.com

STUART — Francisco Pablo wants the deputy who killed his brother to know he's sorry: He regrets that they injured Deputy Jason Howard and that he chose to drink and drive.

And while the 18-year-old Indiantown resident does not know whether Howard was justified in shooting 21-year-old Miguel Pablo during a traffic stop Sunday, he misses his brother all the same.

"I'm hoping I could just see him for one last time," Francisco Pablo said Monday from his

cell in the Martin County Jail, where he is being held on a charge of felony battery on a law enforcement officer. The officer, Howard, did not suffer life-threatening injuries in the attack and has since been released from the hospital.

Francisco Pablo said he was driving his brother and three friends to see a movie at the Treasure Coast Square Mall when Howard pulled over his 2000 Ford F-150 in the mall parking lot about 5:30 p.m. for erratic driving.

Hoping to distract Howard so his younger brother could speed away and avoid a DUI charge, Miguel Pablo ignored the other occupants' pleas and jumped out of the pickup.

See **BROTHER**, page A5

Photos by **DEBORAH SILVER** • deborah.silver@scripps.com



Angelina Francisco, left, walks past a memorial for her son, Miguel Pablo, which a family member put together at Francisco's Indiantown house on Monday. This childhood photo of Pablo, who turned 21 on May 29, was the most recent photo of him that the family had. It was surrounded by flowers and candles.

WHO ARE THE SUREÑOS?

Southern California street gangs banded together in prison to combat the unified Northern California street gangs. Young street gang members began calling themselves Sureños, (Spanish word for "Southerner"). They were told that when they would be arrested, they would one day join the Mexican Mafia. Sureño street gang members often identify with the symbols XIII, X3, 13, and 3-dots.

www.gangwatchers.org

TCPALM.COM
FLORIDA'S TREASURE COAST AND PALM BEACHES

MALL SHOOTING
See a photo gallery, video and the arrest report.

INSIDE: Miguel Pablo's family, friends talk about his death. **A5**

TO THE SPACE STATION & BEYOND!



STORY, A4

Real estate taxable value drops by 7%

It was the first time in 14 years Martin County experienced a decline in value, a trend expected to continue

BY GEORGE ANDREASSI
george.andreassi@scripps.com

STUART — The taxable value of Martin County's real estate dropped by 7 percent in 2007, the largest decline in recent memory, Property Appraiser Laurel Kelly said Monday.

It was the first time in 14 years the county experienced a decline in value, Kelly said, and she expects the trend to continue this year.

According to a preliminary estimate, the value of the county's real estate dropped by \$1.5 billion to \$21.2 billion between Jan. 1, 2007, and Jan. 1, 2008, Kelly said.

"This is unusual," Kelly said. "It's the largest decrease I've seen in the 20 years I've been here. We've never had any decrease like this."

The property appraiser said she expects further reductions by the time she completes the final tax roll in about a month, and sales so far in 2008 indicate the downward trend in values will continue.

"It still seems to be coming down," Kelly said about the real estate market. "Sales are still dropping."

But Kelly said she couldn't predict when the market would turn around.

The last time the taxable value of Martin County's real estate dropped was 1993 when it went down by less than one-half of one percent.

See **VALUE**, page A5

NEW CONSTRUCTION IN 2007

Kohl's Department Store, Jensen Beach: \$5.9 million
Holiday Inn Express, Lost River Road, Stuart: \$3.3 million
Shopping Plaza at U.S. 1 and Market Place, Stuart: \$3.3 million
New storefronts at U.S. 1 and Monterey Road, Stuart: \$3.2 million
Industrial building on Jack James Drive, Tropical Farms: \$2.9 million

Federal government to offer Social Security debit cards

BY ELLIOTT JONES
elliott.jones@scripps.com

The government's use of ATM debit cards for payments to citizens is expanding to incorporate thousands of Social Security recipients in Florida.

The state already has issued debit cards to more than 1.5 million recipients of child support and food stamps, state officials said. Cardholders make millions of dollars in cash-less payments with just the swipe of a card — eliminating the possibility of lost or stolen benefit checks.

Nationwide, about 60,000 Social Security checks are forged annually and 600,000 are reported stolen, officials said. Millions of dollars are involved.

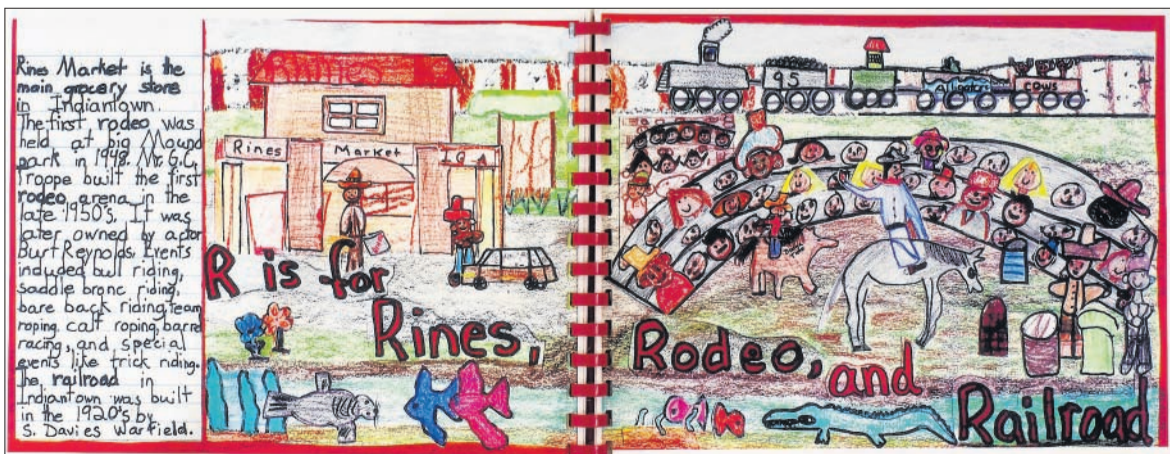
INSIDE: A look at the MasterCard debit cards for Social Security recipients. **A5**

So by August, the federal Department of the Treasury is planning to start offering debit cards to Social Security recipients who don't have bank accounts in Florida. The federal program could help many of the nearly 11,000 Treasure Coast Social Security recipients.

While no local figures are available, nationally about 28 percent of Social Security retirement recipients nationally don't have checking accounts. The percentage figure is much higher — 59 percent — among

See **DEBIT CARDS**, page A5

INDIANTOWN CELEBRATED FROM A TO Z



MATTHEW RATAJCZAK • matthew.ratajczak@scripps.com

"I is for Indiantown: An Alphabet History" was released Monday at Warfield Elementary School in Indiantown. Since November, six Warfield second-grade classes, gifted students from Warfield and Indiantown Middle, and a handful of television production classes students from South Fork High collaborated on the project. **Story, Page B1.**



CONTACT US

Have a story idea?.....223-4743
Delivery problem?.....221-4160
Classified.....(877) 247-2407

INDEX

Advice.....D3
Business.....B9
The Buzz.....A2

Classified.....E1
Comics.....D6
Election.....A3
Horoscope.....D2
The Lineup.....C2
Local.....B1
Lottery.....A2
Movies.....D3
Obituaries.....B4
Opinion.....A6
Puzzles.....D2
The Record.....B2
Space Watch.....B2
Sports.....C1
Television.....D5
Weather.....C6

Family mourns shooting victim's death days after his 21st birthday

BY ZACH SMITH
zachary.smith@scripps.com

INDIANTOWN — Blue balloons still were taped on the wall of the modest yellow house, remnants of party last week for Miguel Pablo's 21st birthday.

But the large group of family that gathered at the home Monday wasn't there to celebrate, but to mourn Pablo's shooting death Sunday after a confrontation with a Martin County sheriff's deputy at the Treasure Coast Square mall.

"It's unbelievable," said Cecilia Marcos, Pablo's aunt. "It's unbelievable."

Silence permeated the house as stunned family members sat in the home's living room. Those who spoke said they could not reconcile the image of the respectful son and friend they said they knew with the description of a man who, authorities said, attacked a deputy and ended up in a pool of blood, covered with a white sheet.

Marcos said the mother of the brothers, Angelina Francisco, is in denial her son Miguel is dead, hoping that there was some sort of mistake.

Family members even denied that Miguel Pablo had tattoos, even though investigators said that one of the bullets

"He was always checking in. If he came home late and I was asleep, he would come in my room, just to say hello and tell me he arrived home."

Miguel Pablo, victim's father

that hit him pierced a tattoo on his arm that spelled out "Sureños," the name of a Southern California street gang. Family members said Miguel Pablo was born in the United States — his parents immigrated from Guatemala.

Miguel Pablo's father, a field worker, remembers Miguel Pablo as a "good man" and a respectful person.

"He was always checking in. If he came home late and I was asleep, he would come in my room, just to say hello and tell me he arrived home," he said.

Marcos said the day began like a typical Sunday, when two of the three brothers in the family would leave for the day and go to the flea market or play basketball.

Their father, 61-year-old Miguel Pablo, had spoken with the brothers several times throughout the day, but became worried after they didn't answer their cell phones around 6 p.m.

Miguel Pablo's oldest son, Mario Pablo, was on his way to church when Francisco Pablo called him from jail to tell him about the shooting and

death of his brother. Mario Pablo returned home around 8 p.m. to tell the family the news.

Francisco Pablo is a junior at Spectrum Junior-Senior high school. Miguel Pablo was a student at South Fork, but left during his junior year and attended the Indiantown Adult Learning Center.

Miguel Pablo worked on the sales floor of W&W Lumber in Indiantown for over a year. Co-workers say he was known as an exceptional employee.

"Here at work he was mild-mannered ... He was great with our customers," said Alan Cooper, a manager at the store. "This is devastating to us; everyone's like family here."

Adam Gilliam, a supervisor at the store, said Miguel Pablo would often go to customers' homes to lend a hand with home improvement projects.

Miguel Pablo went to church every Thursday, Gilliam said, and he made serious efforts to stop drinking after an arrest for disorderly intoxication in 2007.

"This is just too strange," he said.

very competent road patrol officer," a supervisor wrote in April as part of Howard's last annual evaluation. "He requires little supervision during his shift and makes good, sound choices during his calls."

While Francisco Pablo does not have a prior arrest record in Florida, his brother has been arrested for driving on a suspended license. In May 2007, a Martin County Sher-

iff's deputy arrested him on a charge of disorderly intoxication for trying to fight with various people during a 15-year-old's birthday party, according to an arrest report.

He pleaded no contest and was sentenced to six months probation, according to Martin County Court records.

Staff writer Will Greenlee, WPTV and staff researcher Karen Bayha contributed to this report

VALUE

FROM PAGE A1

county records show. Since then, the taxable value increased every year until 2007.

Assistant County Property Appraiser Mike Fribourg said he believes real estate prices rose too much between 2003 and 2006.

"It's a market correction," Fribourg said. "I've felt for a long time that people have been paying too much for real estate. Just like you get a correction in the stock market, you get a correction in the real estate market as well."

The decline in taxable values means local governments

will collect less property tax money if they keep their property tax rates the same.

Stuart City Manager Dan Hudson said 8 percent decline in the taxable value of the city's real estate was slightly more than anticipated.

As a result, the city probably would be facing a budget shortfall of \$600,000 instead of \$500,000 as originally anticipated, Hudson said. But it could have been worse.

"I'm thrilled that it's not more severe," Hudson said.

Kelly said city's commercial building owners benefited from the new \$25,000 property tax exemption established last year by the state legislature.

The Town of Jupiter Island

was the only local government that did not see a loss of taxable value in 2007, Kelly said. But the increase of \$34 million, or about 1.7 percent, was due mainly to new construction.

Kelly warned that the amount of the property value declines varied from neighborhood to neighborhood with some residences losing more than 25 percent of their value and others less than 5 percent.

And longtime homeowners with a homestead exemption and related 3 percent cap on increases in assessments can expect their taxable values to increase by 3 percent until the assessed value catches up with the market value, Kelly said.

TAXABLE VALUE

Martin County Property Appraiser's estimate of the taxable value of the county's real estate as of Jan. 1, 2008:

City	2007	2008	Difference	Percent
Stuart	\$2,340,896,920	\$2,150,006,537	-\$190,890,383	-8.15
Jupiter				
Island	\$2,010,665,580	\$2,044,796,566	\$34,130,986	1.7
Sewall's Point	\$675,344,340	\$656,059,674	-\$19,284,666	-2.86
Ocean Breeze Park	\$24,915,852	\$23,111,198	-\$1,804,654	-7.24
Martin County	\$22,743,297,649	\$21,213,866,737	-\$1,529,410,912	-6.72

DEBIT CARDS

FROM PAGE A1

disabled and lower-income individuals getting Social Security supplemental payments.

The card can be used to withdraw cash from an ATM and make purchases where MasterCard is accepted, said Alvina McHale, spokeswoman for the commissioner of the department's Financial Management Service.

"Certainly it will be in Florida by August," said McHale.

The card and the first replacement card would be free. Additional cards would cost \$4 each.

Until now, Social Security recipients without checking accounts had only a federal debit-ATM card with limited access. About 90,000 recipients use it.

DIRECT EXPRESS

The Department of the Treasury issues MasterCard debit-ATM cards to Social Security recipients who don't have bank accounts. Those people currently receive paper checks that can be lost or stolen. Monthly benefits are to be credited to accounts accessible through ATM withdrawals or purchases. Every cardholder would have an individual account and number. Notification would be by mail. Individuals are notified if they overdraw their accounts. The amounts are deducted from the next month's deposits. The conversion could save the federal Department of the Treasury \$44 million a year. Checks cost 98 cents each versus 10 cents for an electronic transfer.

Department of the Treasury

"We didn't see that wide of an acceptance," said McHale. That card was developed in response to a federal law passed in the mid-1990s requiring that electronic deposits be provided for more people.

"It is a card of last resort," she said.

After August, the new card will be offered to new enroll-

ees in Social Security. Later on, any Social Security recipient could opt for the card, but McHale expects that few will. The vast majority of recipients have benefits directly deposited in bank accounts.

Eventually, the Treasury Department might even use a debit-ATM card to pay federal pensions, veteran benefits and income-tax refunds.

BROTHER

FROM PAGE A1

During the fight with Howard, Miguel Pablo either punched or pushed the deputy, knocking him to the ground, and then Francisco Pablo joined in, according to the Martin County Sheriff's Office.

"I think I kicked the police twice, and that's when I tried to get my brother to calm down, and that's when he shot him," Francisco Pablo said.

Howard, 27, shot at Miguel Pablo and struck him twice, once in the chest and once through his right bicep, where the word "Sureños," the name of a Southern California street gang, was tattooed, according to the Martin County Sheriff's Office.

It is not yet known whether Miguel Pablo belonged to a gang, but detectives do not think the attack against Howard was gang-related, said Bob Crowder, Martin County sheriff.

Crowder said he believe Howard acted appropriately in a difficult situation.

"We don't like to be in the position of having to use deadly force and take a life but that's what happened," Crowder said " ... The individual who exited the vehicle and assaulted the deputy started something that he wasn't prepared to finish. And the deputy had to bring that to an end or he might not be with us today."

Howard lost consciousness during the attack and was treated at Martin Memorial Medical Center for swelling to his face and body, Crowder said.

The State Attorney's Office is investigating the incident, and the case likely will be brought before a grand jury to decide whether the shooting was justified, said Nita Denton, assistant state attorney. If the shooting is deemed not to have been justified, the grand jury could hand down an indictment against Howard.

Howard will remain on paid administrative leave pending all investigations, according to the Sheriff's Office.

The only disciplinary actions the Sheriff's Office has taken against Howard since he was hired in April 2004 were twice suspending him for one day for accidental traffic crashes involving his squad car, according to his personnel file. He has received several commendations for his service helping the public.

"Deputy Jason Howard is a

Give yourself a wake up call.

Subscribe today and get this paper delivered right to your home every morning.

Call Toll Free
1-866-707-6397.

Wake up to  SCRIPPS
Treasure Coast Newspapers

345537

Seniors rule!

50 Plus
Lifestyles

345537



who are you spending your quality time with?

have you been a dad today?

Ad Council.org

for more ideas call 800-790-DADS or visit www.fatherhood.org

National Fatherhood Initiative

345537