

Worker's suggestion earns \$1,000

By TOULA VLAHOU
Staff Writer

FORT LAUDERDALE — David Rose had a good idea on how to save the city some time and money. And it paid off for him.

Mayor Bob Cox handed Rose a \$1,100 check last week for his suggestion to bid out sewer repair work. His proposal saved the city \$11,000 in one year and made getting emergency sewer repairs more efficient, said City Engineer Art Dilione, Rose's boss.

Before implementing Rose's suggestion, the city had to call a contractor every time emergency repairs were needed.

"It worked out good. I am happy with

the settlement," said Rose, an 18-year city employee.

"That's the kind of thinking we need," Cox said during last week's commission meeting.

Rose, 39, received the money under a city incentive program, which offers employees monetary rewards for making suggestions that save the city money.

Employees who are selected by a committee to be rewarded for their ideas receive 10 percent of whatever was saved by the city over a year.

The six-year program has produced several winners, including a \$5,700 award that went to a firefighter several years ago, said Bruce Lucier, training development coordinator who imple-

ments the program.

"It's an employees' suggestion program to try to get ideas from employees on ways to improve services in the city, solve problems, implement changes to save money or improve the level of service," Lucier said.

Employees who make suggestions that improve the city, but do not save any money, get \$25, \$50 or an invitation to lunch.

According to Lucier, Rose first suggested the contracting change in 1984, but officials at the time rejected it. When Rose resubmitted his idea last year, officials in the Engineering Department reconsidered because of the large number of repairs that had to be made.

Although the reward program motivates employees to become more resourceful, it has had its controversy.

Last year an employee in the city's Utility Department was embroiled in a dispute with the city over the size of his reward.

Curtis Ruffin won \$5,000, but at the time he argued for more.

Ruffin earned the award for suggesting a cheaper way for the city to process and haul sludge, a byproduct of the sewage treatment process.

He made the suggestion in 1984, but it took about three years for city officials, and an arbitrator, to decide whether his suggestion was responsible for the entire \$350,000 the city saved.

Broward discharges supervisor

By JON MARCUS
Staff Writer

A Broward County employee was fired on Monday for using a county van to move her personal belongings, ordering co-workers to help her on county time and claiming overtime worth more than \$10,000 — much of it on days she did not work — officials said.

County records show that Donna Sato, an accounts supervisor based at a county water plant, got \$10,624 in overtime during the first nine months of 1988 — doubling her regular pay during that period, which was \$10,574.

Also on Monday, J.P. Herde, the employee's supervisor, was suspended without pay while an investigation continues into charges that he also was involved in the incidents.

Public Works Director Ray Carson, whose department oversees the county's utilities operation, said other workers will be warned against such practices in the wake of the disciplinary actions.

"The policies regarding use of county resources for personal use is very clearly stated. We'll re-emphasize that, as we often do periodically," he said.

Investigators said they discovered that Sato charged the county overtime for attending a seminar on a Saturday, when the program was held on a week day; received regular and overtime pay for days she was home recuperating from an operation; received overtime for working Labor Day weekend, when she was vacationing in Louisiana; and was paid for working on a day she was vacationing in the Florida Keys.

The investigation also found that Sato used the county van to move her personal belongings from her home to a warehouse in Davie over three days in July and that she ordered three county employees to help her move.

Sato also was paid for the days she stayed home to pack because she claimed that she was at work on those days, the investigation found. Sato was hired by the county in August 1986.

Herde, her supervisor, has worked for the county for 18 months.

Herde has admitted ordering some of his employees to run an errand for Sato, officials said. His signature appears on Sato's time cards, including those that reportedly were falsified by her, but Herde has denied knowing anything about those incidents.

The Amalgamated Transit Union, which represents utilities employees, informed the county on Monday that it would appeal Sato's firing, Carson said. Union officials did not return telephone calls.

Calls to Sato's home went unanswered on Monday. Herde did not return messages. Both have told investigators they were victimized by disgruntled colleagues.



Photo/SHARK FRALICK

That's his line

Daredevil Steve Trotter, a seasonal bartender in Fort Lauderdale and aspiring stuntman who tumbled to fame in 1985 when he slid over Niagara Falls in a barrel, jumps from the Sunshine Skyway Bridge in Tampa on Sunday

attached to a 203-foot tether. Trotter, 27, made several arcing swings, then dropped the final 37 feet to the water. He performed a similar stunt in 1986 at the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco.

Suspect testifies woman died during sex

By LARRY KELLER
Staff Writer

As she sat trussed and naked in the back of a limousine last January, Deborah Lynn Herdmann

"She was tied up!" retorted Assistant State Attorney Kelly Hancock.

Bedford, 35, of Lauderdale Lakes, said he accidentally killed Herdmann on Jan. 2 in the rear of the limousine during a dangerous sex act called erotic

eral times a day to ask about Walsh and discuss her interest in kinky sex.

On the day Herdmann died, Bedford said he drove Herdmann to Walsh's mother's house, where she joined Walsh for a drive in the limousine he drove

phixia act. But something went wrong, and Herdmann fell unconscious to the floor of the limousine.

"I said, 'Vince, I think I broke her neck,'" Bedford said.