

In the know

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"I have no information that supports those tweets. ... The Department of Justice has asked me to share with you that the answer is the same for the Department of Justice."

FBI director James Comey, on President Donald Trump's March 4 posts claiming that he had been the target of eavesdropping ordered by President Barack Obama.

Comey: No proof on wiretap claims



James Comey, director of the FBI, arrives Monday at a House hearing concerning Russian meddling in the 2016 election.

The FBI director also confirms his agency is investigating ties to Russia.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The FBI is investigating whether Donald Trump's associates coordinated with Russian officials in an effort to sway the 2016 presidential election, director James Comey said Monday in an extraordinary public confirmation of an inquiry the president has refused to acknowledge, dismissed as fake news and blamed on Democrats.

In a bruising five-hour session, the FBI director also knocked down Trump's claim that his predecessor had wiretapped his New York skyscraper, an assertion that has distracted White House officials and frustrated fellow Republicans who acknowledge they've seen no evidence to support it.

The revelation of the investigation of possible collusion with Russians, and the first public confirmation of the wider investigation that began last summer, came in a remarkable hearing by one branch of government examining serious allegations against another branch and the new president's election campaign.

Tight-lipped for the most part, Comey refused to offer details on the scope, targets or timeline for the FBI investigation, which could shadow the White House for months, if not years. The director would not say whether the inquiry has turned up evidence that Trump associates may have schemed with Russians during a

» See COMEY, 3A

What they're saying

"Investigating it and having proof of it are two different things."

White House press secretary Sean Spicer, on the FBI inquiry



« "The Democrats made up and pushed the Russian story as an excuse for running a terrible campaign."

President Donald Trump, on Twitter

"The Russians successfully meddled in our democracy and our intelligence agencies have concluded they will do so again."

Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif.

"I thought it was against the law to disseminate classified information. Is it?"

Rep. Trey Gowdy, R-S.C., on leaks to the media

"I can promise you, we will follow the facts wherever they lead."

FBI director James Comey



Times files (2008)

Community Development Block Grant funds help subsidize the Greater Ridgecrest YMCA near Largo.

Trump budget a jolt locally

Housing agencies and governments say the plan would hit poor communities.

BY CHRISTOPHER O'DONNELL
Times Staff Writer

TAMPA — Money for federal programs intended to raise up low-income neighborhoods has become scarce in recent years as Congress has looked to reduce the nation's deficit.

But local government and housing agencies say they weren't prepared for the elimination of those programs as proposed by President Donald Trump in his first budget.

Among those on the chopping block are the Community Development Block Grant and the HOME Investment Partnership. They help local governments pay for brick-and-mortar projects such as the construction or repair of affordable housing and new roads or street lighting in low-income neighborhoods.

The programs also make up funding shortfalls for charities and nonprofits that work in those neighborhoods. In Tampa Bay, that includes organizations that work to prevent people becoming homeless, recreational facilities like YMCAs and shelter programs like St. Vincent de Paul South Pinellas.

Congress will make the final decision on the federal budget. But local officials are warning that scrapping the programs, which have been in existence for decades, will dramatically deepen poverty and hardship in already disadvantaged neighborhoods.

"They are the life blood that comes to the community to assist the very low and low-income households," said Joshua Johnson, St. Petersburg's director of housing and community development. "It's going to be very hard for local governments to raise the type of funding to address these issues."

St. Petersburg received \$1.6 million in block grants this year and \$670,000 from the HOME program.

Recipients of that money

» See BUDGET, 4A

More billionaires are among us

Forbes' annual list of the richest of the rich grew to more than 2,000 billionaires this year, with Bill Gates still holding on to the world's No. 1 spot with \$86 billion. And in Tampa Bay, the ranks of the wealthy rose to seven billionaires from four last year.

Business, 4B

A year after death, widow cremated

The body of Joy Culverhouse, widow of the former Tampa Bay Buccaneers owner Hugh Culverhouse, has been cremated. The nearly one-year delay came after legal wrangling among her descendents. Her cremation has not put an end to the lawsuits.

Local, 1B

More tankers may come to MacDill

The Air Force base is one of two competing to be the new home for 12 KC-135 Stratotanker refueling jets — and the 400 personnel who come with them. The new tankers would come from a base in Kansas. The Air Force is moving the planes to make room for newer KC-46A Pegasus tankers — part of a program to replace the aging fleet of Stratotankers.

Local, 1B

Panel puts off adoption of rules

Not everything went smoothly during the first meeting of the state's Constitution Revision Committee, which convenes every 20 years and drafts measures directly onto the 2018 November ballot.

Local, 1B

He's still ready to prove his worth

Despite getting a six-year \$53.5 million deal, Rays centerfielder Kevin Kiermaier says nothing will change about his dedication to hard work and drive. "I'm still so hungry. I want to be great in this game, and play for as long as possible."

Sports, 1C

TODAY'S WEATHER

Beautiful day

8 a.m. 58° Noon 68° 4 p.m. 74° 8 p.m. 67°

0% chance of rain
More, back page of Sports

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Start the day right

Get top headlines and what you need to know to start your day in your inbox every morning with our Daystarter email newsletter. Sign up at tbtim.es/enewslatters.

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State attorney challenges Scott

She files a motion after being taken off a case due to death penalty view.

Associated Press

ORLANDO — A Florida state attorney says the governor overstepped his bounds when he removed her from the case of a man accused of killing a police officer after she pledged to not pursue the death penalty.

State Attorney Aramis Ayala filed a motion in court Monday asking a judge to allow her to

present that argument in court.

"Every day State Attorneys here in Florida make important decisions on who to charge, what to charge and what to prioritize," Ayala wrote in the motion. "Giving the governor the tremendous and unfettered discretion to interfere in that decision making would be unprecedented and could

undermine the entire justice system in Florida."

Gov. Rick Scott removed Ayala from Markeith Loyd's case and reassigned it to a prosecutor in a neighboring district on Thursday after Ayala announced she would not pursue the death penalty in any case while she is in office. Loyd is charged with

» See ATTORNEY, 3A



State Attorney Aramis Ayala says Scott went too far.



Gov. Rick Scott took Ayala off a police-slaying case.



Six inmates reported the shower at Dade Correctional Institution was rigged so guards could turn up the heat to punish prisoners.

Prosecutor: Inmate death accidental

A report says the man was not burned after two hours in a shower despite earlier claims.

BY JULIE K. BROWN
Miami Herald

A 101-page investigation has concluded that corrections officers who locked a schizophrenic inmate in a hot shower at Dade Correctional Institution and left him there for nearly two hours

— until realizing he was dead — committed no crime.

The report, released Friday by Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernández Rundle, said the 2012 death of 50-year-old prisoner Darren Rainey was an accident, the result of complications from his mental illness, a heart condition and "confinement in a shower."

At least six inmates claimed that the shower was rigged so that corrections officers controlled the temperature and

were able to crank it up to scalding — or down to an uncomfortably frigid spray, thereby using it as punishment to control unruly inmates, most of whom suffered from mental illnesses.

But the state attorney's two-year investigation decided that the inmates' statements were not credible.

While the report cited significant inconsistencies in the accounts of inmates, it acknowledged the same was true to a

» See SHOWER, 4A



Darren Rainey, who grew up in Tampa, was held for drug possession.

