

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
JIMMY PATRONIS'

WEEKLY RUNDOWN

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

[DFS Homepage](#) | [Past Issues](#) | [PDF](#)

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Floridians,

The 2017 Hurricane Season impacted virtually every county in Florida, with Hurricane Irma resulting in more than \$8.6 billion in insured losses. The 2018 Atlantic Hurricane Season is right around the corner. Just a little preparation now can save you a lot of trouble if a hurricane were to make landfall in your area.

There are several things you can do such as come up with a family communication action plan, where you set up ways to connect with your loved ones in the event of an emergency. One of the easiest things you can do is put together a simple [disaster supply kit](#). Our office has great resources on how to build a [hurricane toolkit](#).

Since last year, my office has heard from consumers on their top insurance concerns related to hurricane season. Unfortunately, there are a lot of myths around about preparing for and recovering from a storm. It's critical that you have the right information before the season begins. Take a look at our [myth/fact](#) document for more information

It's never too early to be prepared.

Sincerely,



Stay Connected



News of Interest

Tallahassee Democrat: [Cold case mystery: Woman faces life insurance fraud probe related to husband's death](#)

Panama City: [Firefighters break down mental health stigma by seeking help](#)

WCTV Tallahassee: [State investigating possible insurance fraud in Williams death](#)

Tampa Bay Times: [Hurricane 2018: Get ready with the sales tax holiday, June 1-7](#)

Florida Trend: [Then & Now: 1958 Florida vs. Florida today](#)

St. Augustine Record: [Higher gas prices won't slow tourism](#)

Insurance Journal: [Florida's Ex- Commissioner McCarty Says Banks 'Need Skin In' Mitigation Game](#)

Neighborhood Scout: [Top 100 Safest Cities in the U.S.](#)

CFO's Division of Investigative and Forensic Services Investigates Insurance Fraud in Williams Murder Case

In light of the recent arrest of Denise Merrell Williams for her alleged involvement in the murder of Mike Williams following an investigation by state and local law enforcement partners, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Jimmy Patronis on Wednesday announced he has directed his Division of Investigative and Forensic Services to investigate alleged life insurance fraud relating to Mike Williams' disappearance nearly two decades ago.

CFO Jimmy Patronis said: "As a result of the recent findings surrounding Mike Williams' death, I have directed my office to investigate whether or not his death was part of a scheme to fraudulently profit from his life insurance policies. As this case remains ongoing, we ask members of the community to come forward with any information they may have surrounding this case."

Members of the community who believe they have information surrounding potential life insurance fraud as

it relates to this case are encouraged to contact the CFO's Fraud Tip Hotline by calling 1-800-378-0445. Callers can choose to remain anonymous and those who provide information that leads to a successful prosecution may be eligible for a cash reward.

State Fire Marshal Patronis Calls On Communities to Help Stop Arson

During National Arson Awareness Week, recognized May 6-12, Florida Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and State Fire Marshal Jimmy Patronis calls on all Floridians to report suspicious activity and be on the lookout for those who attempt to commit arson-related crimes.

"Arson-related crimes can destroy property, put lives at risk, and arson-for-profit schemes are one of the factors that can drive up insurance rates," said CFO and State Fire Marshal Jimmy Patronis. "In 2017 alone, 1,004 of the 3,695 fires my office responded to were arson-related. These fires caused 62 injuries, 38 fatalities, and approximately \$23.4 million in property damage. Community awareness and engagement is essential in our fight against this deadly and costly crime."

To report arson, call 1-877-No-Arson (1-877-662-7766). Tips that lead directly to an arrest and conviction may be eligible for a \$5,000 reward. Information can be provided anonymously.

The Bureau of Fire and Arson Investigations is a law enforcement branch of CFO Patronis' Division of Investigative and Forensic Services and conducts fire, arson, and explosives investigations as well as other related criminal investigations statewide.

Arson Awareness Week in Florida is part of a nationwide initiative to educate the public on the important role of community arson awareness and how it can and does play an important role in preventing this dangerous crime.

Operation S.A.F.E., Be Scam Smart Workshops

Florida Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis invites you to participate in [Operation S.A.F.E., Be Scam Smart](#), a free workshop for seniors, their families, and caregivers.

The Florida Department of Financial Services launched Operation S.A.F.E. (Stop Adult Financial Exploitation) as part of CFO Patronis' [On Guard for Seniors](#) initiative. Be Scam Smart workshops help inform, empower, and protect Florida's seniors from financial scams and fraud. If you want to make sure your savings are protected, register for this workshop and get a better understanding of how scam artists and scams work.



Be Scam Smart by learning more about:

- How to Spot Fraudulent Behavior - Are you at risk?
- Common Scams that Target Seniors - Is this too good to be true?
- How to Fight Identity Theft - Protect, Prevent, Police

Feedback from seniors who attended a Be Scam Smart workshop:

"Really learned a lot of valuable information." - Jacksonville

"This was a very valuable topic of interest in our present world." - Arcadia

"I live alone and learned a lot of helpful information that I can share with other seniors." - Zephyrhills

"As a result of this presentation I will be more aware of what is going on around me." - Pensacola

"The info was very good and eyes opened more than ever." - Ormond Beach

Find out more about us in the [About Us](#) section or [Register](#) for an upcoming event, including the following workshop:

Wednesday, May 23 – Gulf Breeze – 6:45 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. CST

Saint Francis of Assisi Episcopal Church Fellowship Hall

1 St. Francis Drive, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561

[Register](#) | [Directions](#) | [Flyer](#)

If you would like to [request a workshop](#) in your area, let us know.

Florida Economic Briefs

Consumer credit increases for first quarter

Consumer credit increased at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4-1/4 percent during the first quarter. Revolving credit decreased at an annual rate of 1 percent, while nonrevolving credit increased at an annual rate of 6 percent. In March, consumer credit increased at an annual rate of 3-1/2 percent.

Source: **Federal Reserve**

Record-highs for Small Business Optimism Index

The Small Business Optimism Index sustained record-high levels increasing to 104.8 in April, the highest in the NFIB Small Business Economic Trends Survey's 45-year history. April is the 17th consecutive month of historically high readings.

Source: **National Federation of Independent Business**