

## **Pandemic Utilities Shutoff Moratorium Ends July 6**

By Hector Flores

Beginning Tuesday, the Charlotte County Utilities Department will resume shutoffs for non-payment and late payment fees for our water and wastewater customers. Customers with previous past due bills will be automatically enrolled in a payment plan.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the Utilities Department suspended shutoffs and late payment fees for non-payment to ensure access to water was available for public health. The payment moratorium suspended more than \$600,000 in utility bills to allow customers temporary relief during the pandemic. The department also worked with the Human Services Department to connect customers with assistance to pay utility bills through local, state and federal programs.

Customers having trouble paying their utility bill are encouraged to visit [www.OURFlorida.com](http://www.OURFlorida.com) for information on program eligibility.

For information regarding your bill, contact Utilities at 941-764-4300 or [CCUSupport@CharlotteCountyFL.gov](mailto:CCUSupport@CharlotteCountyFL.gov).

### **Job fair**

The Charlotte County Public Works Department is having a job fair from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, July 24 at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center, 75 Taylor St., Punta Gorda. Public Works staff help preserve and sustain Charlotte County's infrastructure while protecting precious natural resources for future generations. We offer rewarding careers with great benefits and pay.

Charlotte County Public Works is accredited by the American Public Works Association.

For information, contact Public Works at 941-575-3600 or visit [CharlotteCountyFL.gov/publicworks](http://CharlotteCountyFL.gov/publicworks)

### **Fireworks safety**

On behalf of my self and my colleagues, I want to wish you a safe and happy July 4 weekend. As you're celebrating our Independence Day, please keep fireworks safety in mind. Last year, a new state law took effect that permits personal fireworks use on July 4, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Help keep you, your family and your community safe by following these basic fireworks safety guidelines:

- Follow all county or city fireworks laws;
- Light fireworks on a cleared area, free of any vegetation or debris;
- Remove all debris from roofs or decks where fireworks could land;
- Keep a water source and a shovel or suppression tool on-hand;
- Aim fireworks away from people, homes and wooded areas;
- Never allow children to light or handle fireworks;

- Never use homemade fireworks;
- Discard used fireworks in a bucket of water;
- Store unused fireworks and lighters out of the reach of children;
- Clean up all debris from fireworks;
- Immediately call 911 to report any fires.

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