

Public Works serves public on land, sea and in the air

By John Elias

As we close out August of 2021 our Public Works team is in the height of what we call our “busy season”. With the extreme summer heat comes rain, and it does not ever seem to stop. This coupled with at least two named systems has resulted in the ground being fully saturated. This can also result in standing water as high tides and wind can keep the water from running off as quickly as some might like.

This rain and water has caused our requests for service for mosquito spraying to rise. For example, on our Charlotte County FL App alone, calls for service went from 37 in January to 62 in February to 228 in June, and more than 348 in July. This is especially challenging with the influx of new residents. We are receiving requests from areas we may not have previously treated, which spreads our resources thin. Fortunately, we entered into an agreement with the Charlotte County Sheriff’s Office in which we share resources and they conduct our aerial missions with a CCSO helicopter. Request for most services we provide can be made through our Charlotte County FL App. To download it, visit www.charlottecountyfl.gov/apps.

Our Engineering Division continues to finalize several high-profile projects including the Burnt Store Road Phase II widening and the Olean Boulevard widening. We continue to monitor the performance of the recently completed Manasota Beach renourishment project. Additionally, we have several sidewalk projects that were recently completed or are under construction.

Several dredging projects are underway and we recently began a robust bridge rehabilitation project that kicked off. Several of them will be completed in West County this year and next. Our annual paving program is also ongoing. Crews are currently on County Road 74 and Atwater Drive. In addition to these projects, we also monitor and inspect several hundred right-of-way permits and various activities that occur throughout the county each week. To check the status of a project in your area or any you might be interested in, visit our interactive project status update map at www.charlottecountyfl.gov/projects.

Our Solid Waste Division continues to operate two transfer and recycling facilities that have increased challenges as a result of social distancing protocols. Working with our franchise hauling partner we also service and collect trash and recyclables from nearly 89,000 residences in unincorporated Charlotte County per week. Recently we have experienced some challenges in completing yard waste routes due to driver shortages but are working diligently to get these caught up.

Our Maintenance and Operations Division continues to maintain signalized intersections throughout the county, as well as all street, stop, and marine navigational signs and markers. We also mow and maintain more than 2,100 plus miles of roads and roadside swales. Did you know we also own and operate several cemeteries and a lock in South Gulf Cove? Recently we entered into two agreements with local law enforcement to allow for license plate readers on some of our facilities. These are not to be confused with “red light cameras” which we do not have in Charlotte County.

Finally, we have been on a multiyear journey to become an accredited agency with the American Public Works Association. This culminated in us submitting and presenting to the accreditation team a few months ago. We are proud to announce that we have officially earned the title of an accredited agency through the American Public Works Association. This is a profoundly important milestone. Accreditation is a benchmark against agencies throughout country that illustrates we are operating at the highest level using best practices. The entire team can be proud of this accomplishment. Our team endeavors every day to deliver exceptional service.

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