

## Communication tools vital to keeping people informed

By Hector Flores

Communication is crucial in any organization, but even more so when the organization has so many external stakeholders like local government. Last month more than 50 county employees participated in a workshop to discuss our revised strategic communications strategy, social media efforts and website administration. About 150 employees are responsible for updating information on department webpages, so ensuring that is done correctly and on a timely basis is important.

It's imperative for our communicators to have a clear understanding of our outreach principles — reach people how they want to be reached is our mantra — and ensure a consistent message is being delivered, both internally and externally.

We recently started a weekly update email people can receive directly in their inboxes. It contains the latest administrator's newspaper column, upcoming events and programs, and timely information about county policies and initiatives. This week's update was heavy on hurricane preparedness and opportunities to attend upcoming readiness seminars. To receive the weekly update, sign up online: [www.tinyurl.com/charlottecountyweeklyupdates](http://www.tinyurl.com/charlottecountyweeklyupdates)

Communication is a two-way street, so we make it easy for people to contact county staff to ask questions or report issues. Simply visit our website, [www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov) and click Contact. On this page, you can submit a comment or question about specific county issues, such as roads, parks, utilities, building, street signs and lights or even general topics. You'll receive a timely response and can track the progress of your submission via email updates.

You can also submit reports directly via your mobile phone using the Charlotte County app. The app also has trail guides for environmental parks and visitor information from the tourism bureau. You can also watch CC-TV live from your phone. Download the free app from your device's app store.

An exciting source of information we're working on is a project called My Neighborhood. This online tool will allow you to enter your address and find dozens of details about your home and your neighborhood, including valuations, taxes, elected officials, voting precincts, nearby parks and libraries, garbage collection schedules, utility providers, evacuation zones and more. Look for an announcement soon on the project's launch date.

### Calendar contest

To highlight our wonderful natural environment, world-class facilities and our healthy, active residents, the theme of our 2023 county calendar will be Active Outside. You can submit photos that feature people participating in outdoor activities, whether it's sports, swimming, boating, beachcombing, bird watching, hiking, playing at the playground or whatever else you do outdoors. Fifteen photos will be featured in the 2023 Active Outside calendar.

It's free and easy to enter. Simply email your photos to [Brian.Gleason@CharlotteCountyFL.gov](mailto:Brian.Gleason@CharlotteCountyFL.gov). Use the subject line Active Outside and include your contact information and the subject of your photo. Winners will receive a free calendar and have their photos featured on the county's website and social media pages. You can enter as many photos as you would like.

The deadline for submissions is Aug. 13, 2022.

Readers may reach Charlotte County Administrator Hector Flores at [Hector.Flores@CharlotteCountyFL.gov](mailto:Hector.Flores@CharlotteCountyFL.gov)

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