



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Ken Doherty
District 1



Christopher Constance
Vice Chairman
District 2



Bill Truex
Chairman
District 3



Stephen R. Deutsch
District 4



Joe Tiseo
District 5

Guiding Principles

- To be recognized as a community leader in quality-of-life issues.
- To improve Charlotte County government's morale and employee satisfaction.
- To increase and enhance the organization's and Charlotte County's productivity and performance.
- To enhance and improve our customers' satisfaction.
- To positively change the image of government.
- To improve communication both internally and externally.

Focus Area Goals

PUBLIC SERVICES

To maintain a safe and healthy community by delivering essential services from skilled, professional and dedicated public servants.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

To create a business climate that promotes a diversified, growing economy consistent with sustainable growth management plans, environmental stewardship and enhanced quality of life.

INFRASTRUCTURE

To build and maintain countywide infrastructure that meets our evolving needs and enhances our community appearance, improves public safety and protects our natural resources.

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

To manage fiscally sound county operations with a culture of transparency, accountability, citizen engagement and innovation.



Annual Report 2024

This annual report looks back at the significant progress of the past fiscal year. The report provides updates on the progress of initiatives, projects, and the many accomplishments by our departments. It highlights our commitment to maintaining & investing in infrastructure, managing growth, protecting the environment, ongoing long-term recovery from past disaster events, and building a culture of resiliency, innovation & continuous improvement - all of which make our County a great place to live, work, and play.

The top priority of our team is always to advance the Board of County Commissioner's strategic focus areas, bold goals and initiatives. Our professional employees accomplish this through their individual and collective actions, and the connection to our daily work through the Line of Sight concepts. They are at the forefront of making our great amenities and facilities come to life. Our dedicated employees strive every day to meet our mission to Deliver Exceptional Services.

As we look ahead, we will continue to face similar same challenges of communities and governments everywhere else, and we remain committed to gathering your input and working together in finding solutions leading to positive outcomes. While our area has been fortunate to experience consistent growth and tourism, it is still important to continually evaluate levels of service, resource allocation and staffing levels through the Board's strategic, priority vetting process. We will proceed conservatively and cautiously via timely updates and priority discussions with the Board.

We truly appreciate your continued confidence in the work we do on behalf of and alongside our citizens to make our community even better.

Thank you,

Hector Flores
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR





**Delivering
Exceptional
Service**

**To preserve and
enrich our community's
quality of life for those
who live, work and play
in our paradise.**



Charlotte CARES

**Committed
Accountable
Resourceful
Energetic
Supportive**

CONTENTS

Administration

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Asset Management | 6 |
| Capital Projects | 6 |
| Legislative | 7 |
| Planning for Growth | 7 |
| Water Quality | 7 |
| Public Information Office | 10 |

Budget and Administrative Services

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Fiscal | 12 |
| Fleet | 13 |
| Information Technology | 13 |
| Purchasing | 14 |
| Real Estate Services | 14 |
| Risk Management | 14 |
| Transit | 15 |
| Wellness | 15 |

Community Development

| | |
|--|----|
| Enhanced Efficiency in Building Plans Review Division | 16 |
| Subdivision Regulations Overhaul | 16 |
| Balancing Development with the Metro Interactive Growth Model Study | 17 |
| Strengthened Website and Social Media Presence | 17 |
| Efficient and Transparent Impact Fee Payment Process | 18 |

Community Services

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Libraries & History Division | 19 |
| Parks & Natural Resources | 20 |
| Recreation Division | 22 |
| UF/IFAS Extension Service | 24 |

Facilities Construction & Maintenance

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Work Orders | 26 |
| Small Projects | 26 |
| Major Projects | 27 |
| Capital Maintenance Plan | 28 |

Human Resources

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Talent Pipeline Development | 29 |
| Internships | 29 |
| Tyler - Munis Implementation | 29 |
| Total Rewards Interactive Tool | 30 |
| Employee Development | 30 |

Human Services

| | |
|---|----|
| Family Services Center Ribbon Cutting and New Partners | 31 |
| Hurricane Ian Recovery | 31 |
| Affordable Housing | 32 |
| Community Garden | 32 |
| Veterans Services | 33 |

Public Safety

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Animal Control | 34 |
| Emergency Management | 34 |
| Division of Fire & EMS | 36 |
| Radio Communications | 38 |

Public Works

| | |
|---|----|
| Mosquito and Aquatic Weed Control | 39 |
| Solid Waste | 39 |
| Engineering | 40 |
| Lighting | 41 |
| Traffic, Signs, and Marking | 41 |
| Maintenance & Operations | 41 |
| Business Services | 42 |

Tourism Development

| | |
|--|----|
| Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor & Convention Bureau | 44 |
| Leisure/Travel Trade Market Development | 44 |
| Marketing | 45 |
| Meetings & Conventions | 46 |
| Public Relations and Social Media | 47 |
| Sports Market Development | 48 |

Utilities

| | |
|---|----|
| American Public Works Association Accreditation Certification Achieved | 49 |
| Capacity Assessment and Assurance Program (CAAP) Framework Development and Pilot Flow Monitoring Program Creation | 49 |
| Water Quality Improvement Projects (Septic-to- Sewer) | 50 |
| Summer High School Internship Program | 50 |
| Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Program | 51 |
| Water and Wastewater Facility Plant Tours | 51 |

ADMINISTRATION

Asset Management

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Asset Management Plan

We completed our Strategic Asset Management Plan and presented it to the Board in June 2024. This included an updated Asset Management Policy as well as a Maturity Assessment for the County as a whole. This Strategic Plan is a five-year plan implementing best practices and is aligned with the Board's Strategic Focus areas and will be reviewed annually by the Steering Committee.

Key staff obtained the Institute of Asset Management's Certificate program and one staff member obtained the Distinguished Diploma.

Charlotte County staff presented our Asset Management Journey during the Institute of Asset Management's North American Conference in October 2024. In addition, staff has collaborated with the City of North Port's Utility Director and will be co-leading a new SW Florida Chapter of the Institute of Asset Management, holding their first meeting sometime in December in Charlotte County.

Cityworks Software System Update

With Public Works going live with the new Asset Management Software system in FY23, FY24 was the year for both Utilities and Facilities to complete their implementation. The Utilities Department has been live on Cityworks since October of 2023 and Facilities started with their HVAC division in June 2024 with the Maintenance division starting in July. Our expectation is that the remainder of the department will be live by Oct. 1, 2024.



Phase 2 for the software implementation include Community Services and Mosquito and Aquatic Control as well as some other integrations such as the "Call Before You Dig" national line 811 and CCTV. In addition, we are migrating to ArcGIS Indoors for our vertical assets to allow for better data to be capture as well as allow staff easier access to the data.

Capital Projects

INFRASTRUCTURE

Capital Projects continue to be a priority as the need for infrastructure to support our rapidly expanding population increases. Capital projects focus on three specific areas, hurricane repairs from Hurricane Ian, replacement, repairs and maintenance for our existing facilities, and planning, development, and construction of new and expanded facilities.

Significant progress has been made in repairs that were due to Hurricane Ian and the remaining projects are those that are more complex and have challenges being addressed via FEMA or insurance. A great accomplishment in this area was the work done by departments to get the Sports Park up and running in time for the 2024 Tampa Bay Rays Spring Training season.

Work on the Tier One 2020 1% local option sales tax projects is well under way with completion of the Family Services Center phase 2 project and the majority of other projects being either in design or under construction. Departments continue to use a highly collaborative approach to obtain stakeholder and community input and work methodically through the projects to present options that are innovative, resilient, and meet the needs of the end users.

One particular project that will remain a focus for several years is the replacement of the Cultural Center. Staff has worked to engage the public in an outreach effort to develop a vision for a replacement for the center. This has led to a more detailed planning effort that will be happening over the upcoming year to develop programmatic and site options for the community, stakeholders, and the Board.

Project delivery staff continue to do a tremendous job working through the challenges faced by most local jurisdictions when it comes to delivery of high quality, cost effective and resilient capital projects. They continue to show their creativity, collaborative approaches, and ability to maximize quality, durability and functionality while minimizing costs wherever possible.

Legislative

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Charlotte County was able to advance several objectives in our state and federal legislative agenda through effective advocacy in both Tallahassee and Washington. After years of advocacy, we were successful in attaining legislation that protects the personal information of our county attorneys, ensuring their safety while performing essential job duties. Working with partners across the state, we were able to defeat term limits for County Commissioners that took away the power of local residents to vote for representatives of their choosing. We also successfully worked with legislators to refine minimum requirements for County Emergency Management Directors ensuring that counties across the state have educated and experienced personnel to provide guidance during a disaster.

At the state level, we were approved for \$1 million towards a dormitory at the Charlotte Sports Park that could house volunteers and disaster response personnel during periods of emergency declaration. Additionally, we supported successful funding requests for several community partners, including the Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County, Charlotte Behavioral Health Care, and Charlotte Technical College.

At the federal level, we were successful in securing earmarks for two key projects. William R. Gaines Jr. Veterans Memorial Park received \$500,000 to continue outfitting the next phase of the park. Additionally, we secured \$250,000 for the Charlotte County Shoreline Protection Feasibility Study on Manasota Key to explore providing federal coastal storm risk management measures.



Planning for Growth

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

The county is seeing unprecedented growth that far surpasses growth spurts seen in the past. Officially, according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the county has passed the threshold meeting the designation of an Urban County of 200,000. Planning for that growth is a significant challenge facing the county and impacts every department. Understanding not only the scale of growth projections but also where the growth is projected to be, has historically been problematic in Charlotte County and yet that knowledge is critical to our future planning efforts. To that end, the county has contracted with a population, housing and commercial forecasting company that specializes in providing detailed projections to government agencies to develop a growth model for the county to inform our future planning strategies. This model, used throughout the organization, gives detailed population and growth projections to help us better plan out capital investments and infrastructure needs and provide greater specificity to our master plans.

Water Quality

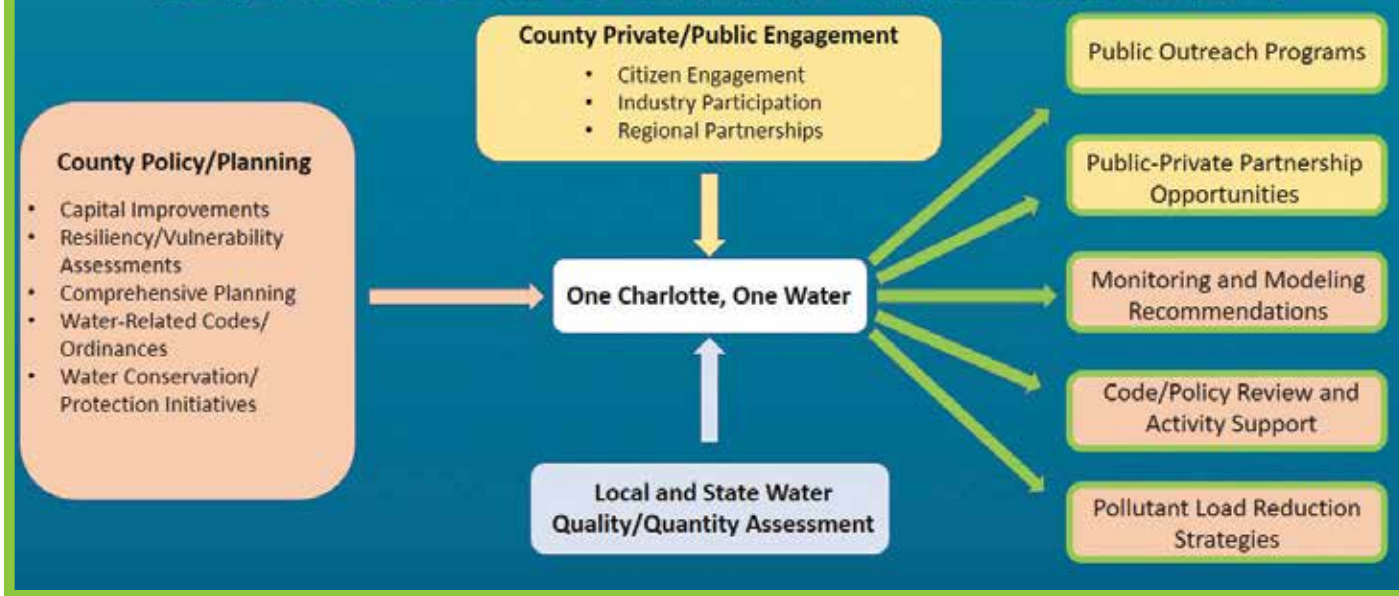
INFRASTRUCTURE

FY2023-2024 saw continued growth in the scope and capabilities of Charlotte County's water quality program, furthering our monitoring, collaborative initiatives, education, and integration into regional activities as we move towards issuance of the initial iteration of the One Charlotte, One Water plan later in 2024.

Monitoring and Assessment

June 2024 marked the end of year two of the county ambient monitoring program, with 60 locations regularly sampled for nutrients and bacteria. Through this effort we are beginning to identify a few locations that occasionally exhibit nutrient or bacteria levels higher than what we would expect to see in a healthy system, and investigations are underway to tease out the root cause. For example, we have observed chronically high levels of fecal indicator bacteria in West County canals; as a result our consultants have been collecting DNA marker samples to determine if the source is natural or human-influenced. Data thus far indicates this might come from natural sources, though continued investigation is needed to verify that assessment. This additional insight is extremely important as it allows us to make sure we focus resources on addressing possible pollution issues that we as humans are responsible for, and thus are capable of addressing.

ONE WATER OPERATIONAL MODEL



In addition, the program has expanded into water flow and elevation monitoring, both to better quantify rates of nutrient and pollution outflow from our canals and also to provide additional service benefit to our departments. For example, water quality staff installed telemetry-based water level gauges at the South Gulf Cove locks and created an online dashboard for Public Works staff. This allows Public Works the ability to view elevation trends and determine when the county needs to request

permission from FWC to allow inflow to South Gulf Cove. Prior to installation of the monitor, PW staff were regularly visiting the lock to manually measure the water levels; the telemetry system allows PW to check levels from their computer, saving time and allowing them to focus on other tasks. In addition, the water quality program worked with Stormwater staff to track water levels in barrier island storm drains alongside tidal fluctuations in Lemon Bay. This helped Stormwater staff to determine areas in which tide flaps were either malfunctioning or completely ineffectual, while also providing insight into possible future stormwater management needs as sea level rise continues to impact our coastal communities.



Collaborations and Outreach

The Water Quality Program continues to build and participate in the development of regional coalitions, studies in our watersheds, and water planning initiatives to make sure Charlotte County has a seat at the table for all water-related activities in and around Charlotte Harbor. For example, recent assessments by the Department of Environmental Protection determined that waterways in and around the Punta Gorda Isles/ Alligator Creek basin are impaired for high levels of fecal indicator bacteria. This announcement spurred concern among those residents, prompting local citizen groups Team Punta Gorda and Heal Our Harbor to form a citizen science monitoring campaign to try to identify possible sources of the bacteria. Charlotte County and Punta Gorda participated in the effort to provide support and feedback on logistics and sampling process/procedures. In addition, the County has been providing sample analytical services for the fledgling effort until they can acquire an independent source of funding. The county has further benefitted from this collaboration in that many of our citizens are retired professionals in the environmental field, with active connections to subject matter experts outside of our region. The county has been able to leverage these connections to help provide additional insights into this bacteria issue and other pollution concerns in the county.



Examples of other coordination and outreach efforts include:

- Hosting the 2024 One Water Summit in January, providing the public with an opportunity to learn about the obstacles and opportunities each department faces in protecting our waters;
- Serving on the advisory panel for the City of North Port's Vulnerability Assessment;
- Acting steering committee member for the development of a statewide One Water Coalition;
- Advisory role on the Southwest Florida Coastal Algal Bloom Workgroup, FGCU's Peace River basin modeling and pollutant analysis project, and other region-scale research projects;
- Collaborating with Florida DEP to expand their continuous monitoring network in the harbor, allowing us to identify potential shifts in water quality along the east wall;
- Presentations and lectures for groups as diverse as the Charlotte Harbor Ambassador program, Sierra Club, Charlotte County Republican Club, and multiple HOAs.



Public Information Office

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Strategic Communications Plan

The Public Information Office's Strategic Communications Plan has been updated, using a SWOT analysis exercise with department public relations managers and PIO staff. Also contributing to the Strategic Communications Plan was information gathered from an employee survey about internal and external communications. As part of the plan staff created a list of action items, including:

- PIO staffing
- PIO organizational structure
- Launch new customer service app
- Add a chat bot to the county website

Online Presence



PIO is implementing a website graphics project with additional department homepage photos, button graphics for URLs and screened background for page sections.

PIO Awards

PIO received the Golden Post Award for "Best Nextdoor Presence" at the 2024 Government Social Media conference and the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors NATOA Government Program Award of Honor for Hurricane Ian coverage. PIO also won three National Association of Counties Achievement Awards.

Celebrations

PIO organized four sales tax facility ribbon-cuttings or groundbreakings.

- CCSO District 4 groundbreaking
- CCSO Admin Facility groundbreaking
- Supervisor of Elections warehouse groundbreaking
- Family Services Center Phase 2 ribbon-cutting

PIO organized a media day to commemorate the reopening of the Charlotte Sports Charlotte Sports Park that included tours of the interior and exterior of the sports park, interviews with contractors, county staff and the Tampa Bays Rays director of operations. The event generated coverage from all four regional television news stations, the local newspaper and a radio station.



CC-TV Now Streaming

CC-TV launched a streaming service so cord-cutters could access programming via their smart TVs. Feedback from residents and the results of surveys conducted at outreach events indicated many people could not watch CC-TV at home because they no longer subscribed to cable television. The free streaming service includes enhanced metrics to gauge viewership.

Surveys

PIO conducted a public input survey about the future of the former Cultural Center of Charlotte County. Nearly 3,000 people responded to the survey with input of potential future programs and services they wanted to see offered at a proposed new facility.

National Association of Counties 2024 Achievement Awards



The National Association of Counties Achievement Awards celebrated 54 years of county innovation in 2024. Charlotte County won 37 Achievement Awards for the following programs:

Children and Youth Category

- Homeschool Physical Education
- Lucky to Love You
- Playground Play Dates
- Tot Time

Civic Education and Public Information Category

- Environmental Parks Virtual Tours
- Hurricane Idalia Social Media Outreach
- Hurricane Preparedness Panel and Hurricane Recovery Panel
- Newsletter JUMBLE
- Nextdoor Platform Presence
- UI/IFAS Extension Charlotte County Planting and Caring for your Young Citrus – the “Sugar Belle”

Community and Economic Development Category

- Efficient and Transparent Impact Fee Payment Process
- Enhancing Efficiency and Accessibility – Electronic Local License Renewals
- Expedited Permitting – Accessory Structures
- Pattern Books – Babcock Ranch

County Administration and Management Category

- New Position Request Workflow Process

County Resiliency: Infrastructure, Energy, and Sustainability Category

- Energy Cost Savings

Criminal Justice and Public Safety Category

- Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Simulator
- Economic Crimes Panel
- Self Defense 101

Health Category

- Elevating Mental Health through Community Engagement
- Field Trip Fridays
- Senior Show & Tell Saturdays
- Sunlight Mission Health Fair and Cookout

Information Technology Category

- Community Mapping
- Improving GIS Data transfer through ETL workflows
- Increasing Communication through Optisigns Software

Libraries Category

- What’s Cooking?

Parks and Recreation Category

- Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation
- Aquatics Operations Manual
- Park and Recreation Month: Enhancing Community Well-being and Connectivity

Personnel Management, Employment, and Training Category

- CPR-First Aid-AED Training
- Culture Enhancement Program
- Microsoft Office Internal Trainings
- Public Works Onboarding Program
- Public Works Training Program
- Training & Continuing Education - State Licensed Staff

Risk and Emergency Management Category

- Post-Storm Site Planning & Usage

BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Fiscal

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

MUNIS Implementation

Fiscal Services has been collaborating with the Charlotte County Clerk of the Circuit Court and the County Comptroller's Office to implement the county's new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, MUNIS. This system will streamline day-to-day operations such as accounting, budgeting, procurement, project and grant management, human capital, and payroll. The implementation is progressing well. Over the past year, staff from various departments have engaged in process mapping, current and future state analysis, and module configuration. The new ERP system will be state-of-the-art, reduce redundancy, and enhance work efficiency. The project is on schedule to go live with Financials and Human Capital in October 2024 and January 2025, respectively.



F-ROC

F-ROC (Florida Recovery Obligation Calculation) is an initiative sponsored by the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) aimed at standardizing, streamlining, and simplifying the Public Assistance process. F-ROC focuses on making the documentation and project approval process more efficient and uniform, which helps reduce applicant risk and speed up recovery efforts following disasters. The program includes a set of standardized forms and documentation requirements designed to facilitate faster approvals and reduce redundancy in disaster recovery efforts.



Charlotte County Fiscal Services, in conjunction with the Grants and Contracts Manager, worked diligently to apply for and complete the Disaster Readiness Assessment to opt into the F-ROC program for the 2024 season. Through their

Hurricane Ian Recovery

After Hurricane Ian, Charlotte County Fiscal Services developed a damage assessment tracker that served as a centralized dashboard for all stakeholders, providing crucial information for informed decision-making. This experience taught us valuable lessons, which we applied following Hurricane Idalia. Using the previous dashboard as a template, we created an even more comprehensive tracker for Idalia. With Fiscal Services emphasis on continuous improvement, several new additions were made including adding new dropdown options and columns as needed. This evolving dashboard model has become a standard practice for storm response, reflecting our commitment to efficiency, preparedness, and resiliency.



dedicated efforts, Charlotte County earned an impressive score of 76 out of a possible 80 points, demonstrating the county's commitment to enhancing disaster readiness, resiliency and ensuring effective recovery operations under this new initiative.

Fleet

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Technology Advancements

Fleet is constantly researching advancements in vehicles and equipment to provide departments with more efficient options. With the never-ending growth of Charlotte County and supporting all the ongoing needs, Fleet has been in collaboration with departments to ensure the right equipment is obtained to properly support their needs and to eliminate stops in service. An example was a challenge in supporting department operations related to mowing and the clearing of vegetation. Most equipment is not



designed to work overhead cutting back trees. Our research brought us to some USA-made equipment, designed and built with commonly available parts, and well suited for overhead cutting

with a reach of 28 feet as well as the ability to mow other difficult to reach areas. This new asset should lessen stops in service and become a cost savings over time as well as provide the ability to assist with storm cleanup.

Faster Web Maintenance Software

One of Fleet's ongoing missions is to provide the most efficient asset data for all Charlotte County's divisions. This data has been used in the past to help determine replacements schedules, provide cost analysis for budget purposes. New capabilities of the updated software will assist with tracking of fuel usage, daily service scheduling, workflow, live service status and financial reporting.

Other features are seamless integration with our repair parts integrated business solution service. This will allow our technicians with faster and more efficient methods of ordering and receiving repair parts lessening unit down-time during repairs.

Information Technology

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Business Analyst Implementation

As part of the Information Technology (IT) Division's continuing efforts to better understand and support our departments, IT created the Business Relationship team consisting of eight Business Analysts (BA) and a Business Relationship Manager. Beginning in October of 2023, the team took shape and began formal training and implementation. The BA's assist their assigned departments with process mapping and continual improvement, consultation on IT technologies, lead requirements gathering efforts when requesting new software or changes to existing capabilities, and work to understand the departments' core services, strategic goals, and future plans. The BA's work increases line of site between technology and the services provided by our departments to the public, helping to ensure a culture of continuous improvement and leading to an efficient and effective government.

BCC and Tax Collector IT Collaboration

The Information Technology Division collaborated with the Tax Collector's IT department to consolidate and provide common infrastructure services such as servers, data storage and cybersecurity capabilities that are critical to the delivery of services to the residents of Charlotte County. These efforts reduce duplication of hardware and software, simplify cost management, and takes advantage of economy of scale. This project was completed in March 2024 and built upon the well-established working relationship between the two constitutional offices. The strengthened resiliency of the Tax Collector IT infrastructure, gains in efficiency of management, and reduced hardware/software costs are a prime example of efficient and effective government.



Purchasing

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Electronic bid and quote submissions

Purchasing implemented an electronic bid submission process. This process allows submitters to submit their response to a Request for Bid, Request for Quote or Request for Proposal electronically and links to the BCC's Strategic Focus Area of Efficient and Effective Government. The benefits of moving from paper to electronic submission are cost savings, time savings, flexibility, and security.



Charlotte County Purchasing File Submission Form

1 File Submission Agreement 2 File Submission

Review the following submission information:

- Please be aware of the file submission deadline, submittals received after the due date and time **will not be accepted**.
- This is a one way file submission, please have all files ready for a single submission.
- We will be notified that your files were submitted and you will receive a submission email.
- Zip files are not accepted.** Also, No special characters in the file name. Prohibited characters are: (*~<>|'")
- Please do not include marketing material with the file submission.
- If you are unable to submit the files here, please follow the guidelines on [How To Do Business With Charlotte County | Charlotte County, FL](#) ([charlottescountycl.gov](#))
- Questions may be answered by contacting the Contract Specialist listed on the first page of the solicitation.

Real Estate Services

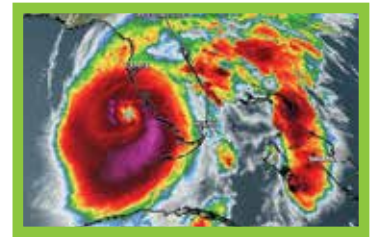
EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Surplus Property Sales

To date, the Real Estate Services Division has completed over 300 Permission to Occupy (PTO) and Release of Easements (ROE) requests on behalf of the public. These requests assist the public as they build, expand, or repair their properties and need to utilize a County-managed easement as part of their property. The fees generated by this program have returned approximately \$50,000 in revenue to the general budget.



NACO Award - Post-Storm Site Planning & Usage



In fiscal year 2023-2024, Real Estate Services has worked with Emergency Operations to develop a Memorandum of Understanding in order to prioritize the potential County need to utilize private sites in emergency operations. The Board subsequently approved Resolution 2024-047 authorizing the use of the MOU agreements as the need may arise. This action should allow for a faster response time and easier site assignments in a pre/ during/post storm action plan.

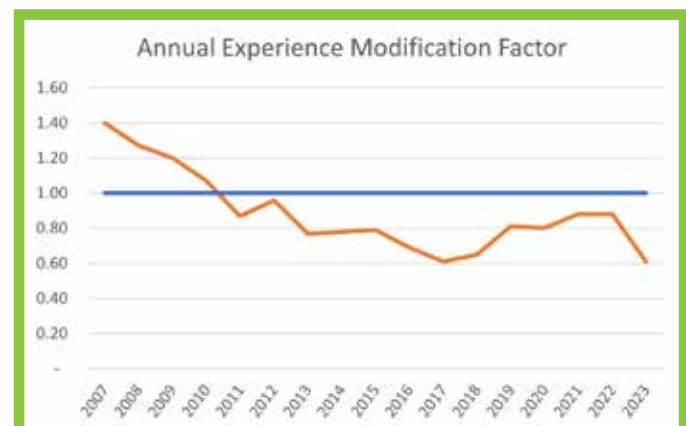
Risk Management

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Workers Compensation

One of the Risk Management Services division responsibilities is overseeing the County's Workers' Compensation program. The county performs many different services to our residents and visitors which exposes our employees to many different types of injuries. Risk Management also oversees safety programs, along with many department and divisional specific training programs to help reduce incident frequency and severity.

One measure of the effectiveness of our program is our annual Experience Modification Factor (Exp Mod). Exp Mod is an adjustment of an employer's premium for Workers' Compensation Insurance and is based on losses (claims). An Exp Mod of 1 would represent an employer that has actuarially expected performance for a similar employer; Poorer loss experience leads to a modifier greater than 1 and better loss experience would be less than 1.





Transit

PUBLIC SERVICES

Ridership

In October 2023, Transit launched new scheduling software Ecolane, and with that, Transit reduced the 3-4 days notice to a 2-hour minimum notice request for public transportation services. Transit staff has worked diligently in managing the Contracted Driver contract ensuring the requested number of drivers are properly trained and performing to expectation. During FY24, Transit staff was aligned to meet the current and near-future needs of Transit, including the hiring of a Mobility Manager, Program Coordinator and Data Coordinator. With the addition of new staff, Transit has been able to begin public outreach efforts, including working with PIO to distribute information via social media platforms.

Staff has attended several events throughout the year including Community Outreach Day, Spring Renewal at the FSC, food distributions and private HOA meetings to promote and educate the community about Transit services. With the aid of Commissioner Deutsch, Transit services were featured on local TV news media.

Lastly, Transit developed a tracking tool for compliments and concerns to improve customer experience. This tool allows a Transit supervisor to be notified immediately of a compliment or concern and is used to identify possible training opportunities. Transit staff resolves each concern and can respond to the customer in the same business day. Compliments are being tracked as a means of extending praise.

With the combination of upgraded scheduling software, public outreach and improved customer experience, ridership has increased close to pre-Covid trips. The total trips for the first nine months of FY24 (64,388), are 90% of the total trips for the same period in FY20 (71,711).

Transit Development Plan

Transit hired a consultant, Benesch, through the RFP process to prepare and draft the 10-year, Transit Development Plan. This plan is a pre-requisite requirement

of FDOT for Transit to receive State Block Grant funding for public transportation operating expenses. Over the course of several months, Transit staff with the assistance of Benesch led four (4) public workshops to gain input from citizens, launched public input and passenger surveys, several stakeholder interviews and multiple group discussions to gain input into the needs and priorities of transit services over the next ten years. The draft plan was presented to the BCC in July for adoption.

Wellness

Cigna's Gold Healthy Workforce Designation

Charlotte County Government was selected as a recipient of their 2023 Gold level Healthy Workforce Designation by Cigna Healthcare for demonstrating a strong commitment to improving the health and vitality of its employees through a workplace well-being program.



The Cigna Healthy Workforce Designation evaluates organizations based on the core components of their well-being program, including leadership and culture, program foundations and execution, policies and accommodations, and additional areas. Organizations

recognized with this designation set the standard of excellence for organizational health and vitality. Cigna Healthcare is proud to honor Charlotte County Government with the Gold level designation for having made good progress towards a healthy work culture by establishing and growing their employee well-being and engagement program.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Enhanced Efficiency in Building Plans Review Division

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Since the first quarter of FY 2023-2024, the Building Plans Review Division has reduced turnaround times from 30 business days to two weeks or less through additional staff onboarding, existing resource management, adjustments in workload management, and process improvements. This improvement benefits the public by expediting building permit issuance, enabling residents, businesses, and contractors to advance construction projects promptly. It enhances customer satisfaction, optimizes resource use, and aligns with our county's strategic goals:

- Faster permit approvals contribute to a safe community by ensuring adherence to safety regulations.
- Accelerated processes support economic growth, environmental stewardship, and quality of life.
- Efficient permit processing improves infrastructure development, enhances community appearance, and upholds fiscal responsibility, transparency, and citizen engagement.

By prioritizing efficiency, we continue to build a thriving community and deliver exceptional services effectively.

| Plan/Permit Review Time Frames as of June 24 | | |
|--|--------------------------|------------------|
| Residential | | |
| Category | Average in Business Days | Average in Weeks |
| New Dwellings & Additions | 6 | 1.5 |
| Carports & Garages | 5 | 1 |
| Remodels | 6 | 1.5 |
| Accessories (non-marine) | 5 | 1 |
| Accessories (marine) | 5 | 1 |
| Commercial | | |
| Category | Average in Business Days | Average in Weeks |
| New Buildings & Additions | 7 | 1.5 |
| Buildouts | 6 | 1.5 |
| Remodels (commercial) | 6 | 1.5 |
| Remodels (multifamily) | 6 | 1.5 |
| Parking Lots/Signs | 5 | 1 |
| Accessories | 5 | 1 |

Subdivision Regulations Overhaul

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

The Community Development team has been working with the development community to update the subdivision regulations, which have been unchanged since the early 1990s. Recent legislation requires a more streamlined process for issuing building permits at the preliminary stage and sets higher design standards. Staff are using this opportunity to improve processes and eliminate public hearings to better use staff and Board time.



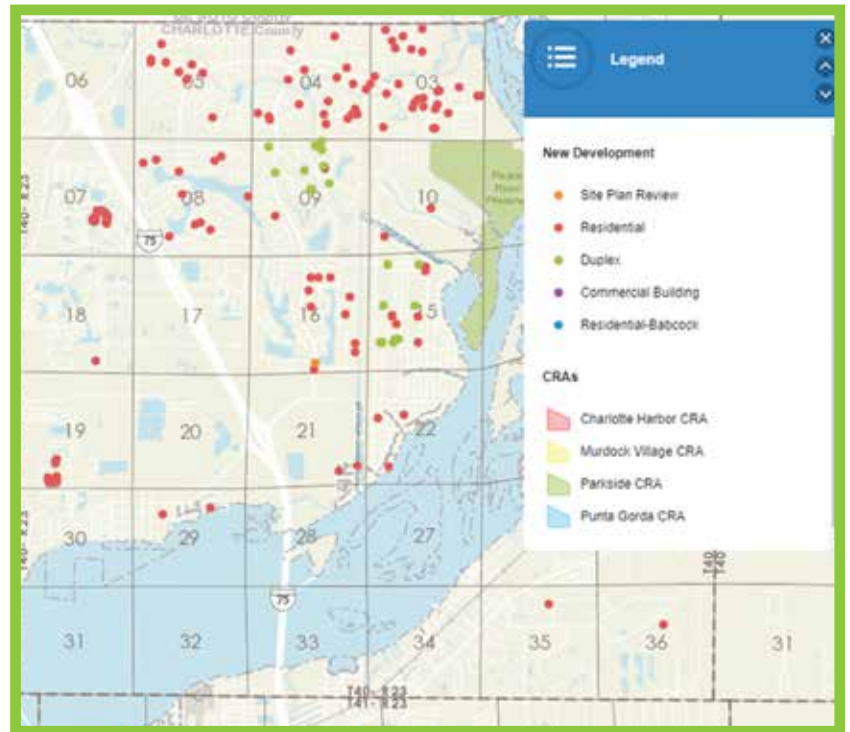
These updates offer several benefits. Allowing more building permits at the preliminary stage speeds up development, benefiting developers and future homeowners. The new regulations ensure developments meet higher design quality and enhance community aesthetics. Eliminating public hearings in this context lets staff and Board members focus on other critical areas, improving government efficiency and responsiveness.

This initiative aligns with the strategic focus areas of Public Services, Economic & Community Development, and Efficient & Effective Government. It helps maintain a safe and healthy community by ensuring new developments meet higher standards. By fostering a favorable business climate and supporting a growing economy, the updates contribute to sustainable growth and a better quality of life. Improving the subdivision process reflects a commitment to managing county operations responsibly, transparently, and innovatively, showing accountability and better citizen engagement through more effective resource use. These updates strategically advance community development goals, benefiting the public through improved efficiency, design standards, and sustainable growth.

Balancing Development with the Metro Interactive Growth Model Study

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Community Development staff collaborated with various county departments and Metro Forecasting to create an Interactive Growth Model (IGM). This model helps to better understand the current and future growth patterns within the county. Staff employs this study in numerous presentations before the Board of County Commissioners and during the evaluation of both internal and external projects. The Metro IGM Project received the 2024 Outstanding Project in Florida Award from the Florida Planning and Zoning Association at its annual conference held in June 2024 at Sunseeker Resort.



This initiative supports the strategic goal of Economic & Community Development by fostering a business-friendly environment that promotes a diversified and expanding

economy. Data-driven planning ensures a balance between development and environmental preservation, safeguarding the region's natural resources while encouraging economic growth. Effective planning enhances public services and infrastructure, improving residents' quality of life and ensuring community needs are met efficiently.



Strengthened Website and Social Media Presence

PUBLIC SERVICES

Community Development has implemented several initiatives to improve citizen education and engagement. These include updating the website for easier access to forms and documents, streamlining permit processes, and establishing centralized hubs for information on the Burnt Store Area Plan and disaster recovery. Social media has also become a priority, enhancing collaboration and education on divisions such as Code Enforcement, Contractor Licensing, Permitting, and Zoning. Since January 2024, Community Development has engaged over 96,000 users on Facebook, increased followers by 30%, and generated nearly 110,000 impressions on Nextdoor.

These initiatives benefit the public by simplifying access to information, promoting transparency, and encouraging citizen engagement. The improved online resources save

residents and businesses time, leading to faster resolutions and increased satisfaction. Centralized information hubs provide reliable updates that are crucial during state of emergencies. Enhanced social media outreach allows for real-time updates and community education, fostering community trust. Overall, these efforts help manage county operations efficiently with transparency, accountability, citizen engagement, and innovation.



Efficient and Transparent Impact Fee Payment Process

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Community Development has simplified the impact fee payment process with Englewood Area Fire Control District by centralizing it, eliminating the need for applicants to visit multiple agencies. This system, developed with various county departments, uses GIS technology to automatically calculate fees and include them in permit costs. Monthly reports ensure timely fund disbursement and transparency.

This initiative benefits the community by allowing residents to pay fees in one location, saving time and reducing frustration. Monthly reports provide clear insights into fee collections and disbursements, fostering trust with the public. The use of GIS technology ensures precise fee calculations, reducing errors and ensuring fair assessments. Streamlined processes enable government employees to focus on community service and improving productivity. By cutting unnecessary travel and administrative redundancies, the collaboration prevents additional taxpayer costs and maintains fiscal responsibility. More efficient government services lead to quicker permit resolutions, enhancing resident satisfaction.

This collaboration aligns with the strategic focus area goal of Efficient & Effective Government by promoting fiscal responsibility, transparency, accountability, citizen engagement, and

innovation. Streamlined processes ensure responsible resource management, detailed reports enhance public trust, accurate fee assessments hold the government accountable, and centralized payments make services more user-friendly. Overall, this initiative improves service delivery and enhances the quality of life for county residents.

Englewood Area Fire Control District Impact Fees

Starting Jan. 1, 2024, there's a new process for Englewood Fire Impact fees.

- The Board of County Commissioners and Englewood Area Fire Control District have signed an interlocal agreement to streamline the permitting process.
- Now, Community Development will handle collecting and disbursing Englewood Fire impact fees.
- Pay your fees through the building permit process at the building department.

Need more info?

Visit [Englewood-Fire.com](https://www.Englewood-Fire.com)

Call 941.474.3311

Email KPowell@Englewood-Fire.com



CHARLOTTE COUNTY
Community Development

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Libraries & History Division

PUBLIC SERVICES

Outdoor Spaces: Reading in Paradise

Library patrons now have the opportunity to enjoy nature while reading outdoors thanks to donations from individual patrons. Englewood Charlotte Library transformed the dismal space between the parking lot and the children's area into a lovely garden that provides a beautiful view. Patrons can wander through the Teaching Garden enjoying nature and learning about the various types of plants and how they grow. Punta Gorda Charlotte Library has installed a shaded pavilion for patrons and passersby to sit, relax, and enjoy a good book. They are now in the process of expanding the outdoor area making use of some of their shade trees for a Reading Garden. Thanks to the generosity of the public and our visionary library staff these additions are making a world of difference to our patrons.



Summer Reading: Charlotte County Kids Rock Reading

Summer Reading is in full swing with a record turnout across the county with 646 children registered and counting. This year's theme- Adventures Begins at Your Library has sparked innovation and creativity in our Youth Librarians and patrons, alike, leading to all kinds of unique learning experiences. In conjunction with our own reading logs and programs, many children are participating in Reading with the Rays, which involves incentive prizes along the way with free game tickets upon completion of the program.



Hurricane Ian Oral Histories

In the spring of 2024, Charlotte County Libraries and History expanded its oral history collection to include interviews with community members regarding their experiences during Hurricane Ian. Representing local businesses and residents, these personal narratives, often poignant and emotional, are an important addition to the local history collection and provide the public with unique perspectives on an event that dramatically impacted Charlotte County and Southwest Florida. Oral Histories can be accessed on the library website under History Services.



Coastal staff also found that any lighting violations observed during routine inspections could not be addressed in a timely manner due to mail issues which is needed to ensure safe sea turtle nesting and hatching. Our newly created door hanger notification tag is placed on the property within a day or two after the violation has been identified by staff. This tag allows for individuals at the residence to be quickly notified that there is an issue so they can reach out to us to resolve immediately.

Ballfields

Ballfields staff completed a redesign and installation of new irrigation grid on fields 1, 2 and 3 at Carmalita softball complex with a goal to provide total matched precipitation on all the turf areas eliminating dry spots. This was accomplished by careful measurements and placement of the irrigation heads and limiting the number of heads per zone to 5 per zone. This maximized the available 90gpm from the existing well pump.



Parks & Natural Resources

PUBLIC SERVICES

Natural Resources Coastal

Staff implemented a new and proactive way to educate beachfront property owners on sea turtle nesting and artificial lighting requirements through the use of door hanger bags. These bags are hand delivered to residences prior to sea turtle nesting season and contain information and tools on how to make their home as well as their presence on the beach sea turtle nest friendly.



Staff also completed a fill field renovation on football field #3 at Ann and Chuck Dever Regional Park and infield renovations at Centennial Park baseball fields 6, 7 and 8.

Land Management:

Land Management staff conducted a 400 acre burn at Shell Creek Preserve across multiple Florida Scrub Jay territories. Prescribed fire promotes rapid regrowth in the months immediately after the fire. The increased growth and biodiversity means an abundant food source for the young Florida Scrub Jays (FSJ) when they hatch and develop into adult birds. Fire helps to create open space that is essential for FSJs to cache food resources when food is less abundant. Prescribed fire also maintains oak height and density within the preferences of Florida Scrub Jays. The areawide hurricane event interrupted the burn season in 2022. These units had not burned in more than 6 years. This fire was a return to our 3-5yr burn interval for the management of Prairie Creek Preserve.

Land Management staff also worked with the department's Public Relations Manager to create virtual tours of our environmental lands



Parks

Parks Maintenance staff continued to do an amazing job balancing day to day maintenance with small repairs that included repairing the decking and substructure at the showers/foot washes, playground repairs and swing replacement at various parks, and repaired/replaced over 65 pickleball nets; and park improvement projects such as the new natural canoe/kayak launch at South Gulf Cove and installing a little free library at Tringali Park; along with ongoing hurricane recovery.



Parks staff did a full work day at Larry Taylor Kiwanis Park removing the remaining components of the small playground that was damaged from Ian to ensure safety of park patrons. They removed old fitness equipment components remaining throughout the park that were damaged and previously waiting on insurance claims. Staff mowed and bush hogged several areas, cleared out overhanging trees and brush on boardwalk and bridges, and made several repairs to railings throughout. In addition to having contractors remove dead trees and stumps, staff also cleared a wider path in areas and removed stumps that were not addressed by contractors. Staff completed

concrete repair on different sections of the sidewalks in the park as well as curbing around the playground. They repaired or replaced benches and picnic tables throughout the park to increase the overall aesthetics for patrons visiting the park.



Special Projects

Fiscal year 2024 included the replacement of the Ann and Chuck Dever playground and construction of a new playground at Centennial Park, along with inclusive play panels being added to various playgrounds.



Franz Ross Park got an upgraded path through the disc golf course and an expanded walking path with fitness equipment as well.

Parks and Natural Resources project staff also coordinated, facilitated and managed the Hurricane Ian and Idalia FEMA Public Assistance Program for all Community Services (Category G) Projects which to date has consisted of: 86 initial FEMA damage descriptions that needed to be pared down, 61 field inspections with FEMA Recovery consultant that totaled over 280 hours over the course of 6 months with an additional 60 hours of desktop reviews to generate Site Inspection Reports, 57 FEMA Damage Inventory sites were moved forward for inspection with



FEMA resulting in 57 FEMA site inspections that totaled over 150 hours over the course of 5 months to generate FEMA DDD's (Damage, Description, Dimension) with a final result of 893 unique damage items now entering the FEMA CRC Review of Scope and Cost for both Ian and Idalia.

William R. Gaines Jr. Veteran Memorial Park Kayak Launch

The kayak launch project at William R. Gaines Veterans Memorial Park in Port Charlotte is a significant initiative aimed at enhancing accessibility and outdoor recreation. In partnership with the William R Gaines Jr Veteran Memorial Fund the project focuses on installing an ADA-compliant kayak launch. This initiative fosters inclusivity and community engagement by providing a safe and accessible space for all visitors to partake in kayaking and experience the therapeutic benefits of nature.



Recreation Division

PUBLIC SERVICES

2024 National Association of County Awards (NACo)

It was another stellar year with NACo awards for the Recreation Division as 13 programs out of 18 nominations were recognized as Outstanding Programs in 2024:

- A.I.R. (Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation)
- Aquatics Operations Manual
- CPR/FA/AED Trainings
- Environmental Parks and Preserves Virtual Tours
- Homeschool PE
- Lucky to Love You
- Mental Health Awareness Month
- MS Office Trainings
- NRPA Month
- Playground Play Dates
- Self Defense Training
- Senior Show and Tell Saturdays
- Tot Time





REC2U

Our Rec2U initiative was revamped to offer four different quarterly events. Each event has a theme with various family inclusive activities planned in various areas of the community. These events were/will be as follows:

- Party in the Park (February 2024) – Centennial Park
- Spring Safari (May 2024) - Ann & Chuck Dever Regional Park/Oyster Creek Environmental Park Trail
- Splash Back to School (August 2024) – McGuire Park
- Family Field Day (October 2024) – Harbour Heights



Spring Training

The Charlotte Sports Park reopened for Spring Training 2024 as a result of damages sustained from Hurricane Ian. There was a total of 13 Spring Training Games with a total attendance of 46,340 (which included one rainout). There was a total of 94 County employees hired for security along with oversight and coordination for an additional 140 staff members with Fan Host and Parking operations. The Charlotte Sports Park also defended their title and was voted as the #1 USA Today 10 BEST Reader's Spring Training Facility. The total estimated economic impact for the 2024 Spring Training Season was \$11,524,800 (an increase of \$5,430,000 from FY 22).



Summer Camp

Our 2024 summer camp program has 3,279 registered children ranging from kindergarten to 14 years of age. The recreation facilities hosting these camps were Centennial Park (CP), Harold Avenue Regional Park (HARP), South County Regional Park (SCRCP), and Ann & Chuck Dever Regional Park (ACDRP). Fun activities this year included Stealth Mobile Laser Tag, Armageddon Lazer Tag, Headpins, Movie Theatre, Sun Splash Waterpark, Treeumph, Water Slides, and Jumpin Do the Happy Bounce, Bisque it Studios, Sky Zone, and Broadway Palms Diner Theater. This year all our camps were all Traditional Summer Camps. Our



guest speakers included Charlotte County Libraries, Drug Free Charlotte County, Drug Free Punta Gorda, MADD, and UF/IFAS Extension Family Nutrition Program. There was a total of 14 camp participants (9 families) who received scholarships through the Kid's Camp Connection to attend this year's program (\$5,947.50 awarded).



UF/IFAS Extension Service

PUBLIC SERVICES

Rain Barrels

In 2023, 63 new Rain Barrels were installed by Charlotte County residents saving at least 163,800 gallons of potable water and accordingly stormwater runoff reduction. On average, each rain barrel saved the consumer, 2,600 gallons of fresh water per household annually. As a result, on average, a household saves \$12.32 annually off their water utility bill.



As a result of FFL irrigation practice adoption by Charlotte County residents, the following impacts were documented:

| Charlotte County Impact Statement | | |
|--|------------|---|
| In Florida in 2023, Charlotte County efforts resulted in a combined estimated water savings of | 589,853 | gallons of water annually, based on Extension clients' reported behavior change. |
| This is enough water to supply nearly | 7 | households with water per year (based on the average of 88,000 thousand gallons per household per year). |
| This water savings is valued annually at a total of | \$2,542.27 | in water bill savings for participating households (based on the average statewide/regional value of \$15.68 per 1,000 gallons) |
| and | \$1,533.62 | in water delivery costs for utilities (based on the average cost of \$2.60 per 1,000 gallons in delivery costs) statewide. |

Eyes on Seagrass: Volunteers Survey Charlotte County's Coast

Seagrass beds have been declining worldwide, and marine ecosystems on Florida's southwest coast are no exception.

Between 2018 and 2021, seagrass coverage in Charlotte Harbor and Lemon Bay has decreased by 23 percent, with the east wall of Charlotte Harbor seeing a decline of 50 percent. Much of this loss can be attributed to the presence of drift algae, which outcompetes seagrass in nutrient-rich waters and blocks light necessary for seagrass survival. Prior to 2019, seagrasses in the Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserves were only surveyed by plane every other year and in water every fall. In 2019, Florida Sea Grant agents collaborated with UF professors and Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserve staff to develop scientifically sound survey methods that trained volunteers could execute.

In 2019 and 2021-2023, Florida Sea Grant trained willing participants to survey 45 sites twice per year in upper Charlotte Harbor and Lemon Bay. The program, Eyes on

Seagrass, runs during spring and summer, as it has during the 2023-24 program year—the typical peak and trough of algae growth in Charlotte Harbor, respectively. In addition to sampling at different times of the year than the state agencies, volunteers collect in-depth information such as algae biomass and take samples for additional lab analyses. The Charlotte County Florida Sea Grant Extension agent made changes to the methods and associated resources



designed to help increase volunteer recruitment, retention and data accuracy.

Since 2019, Eyes on Seagrass has provided close to \$120,000 in value with their surveys. Volunteers dedicate their time and personal equipment to complete surveys, creating environmental stewards alongside a valuable dataset.

Year of the Florida Elm

Extension helped the public celebrate this year by giving out 250 Florida Elms. With the financial help of area benefactors, funding was secured to supply these trees to residents who signed up beforehand. In addition to the tree, each participant viewed a “How to Properly Plant a Tree” video produced in-house. This education session was reinforced with a pamphlet detailing the proper planting and aftercare instructions.

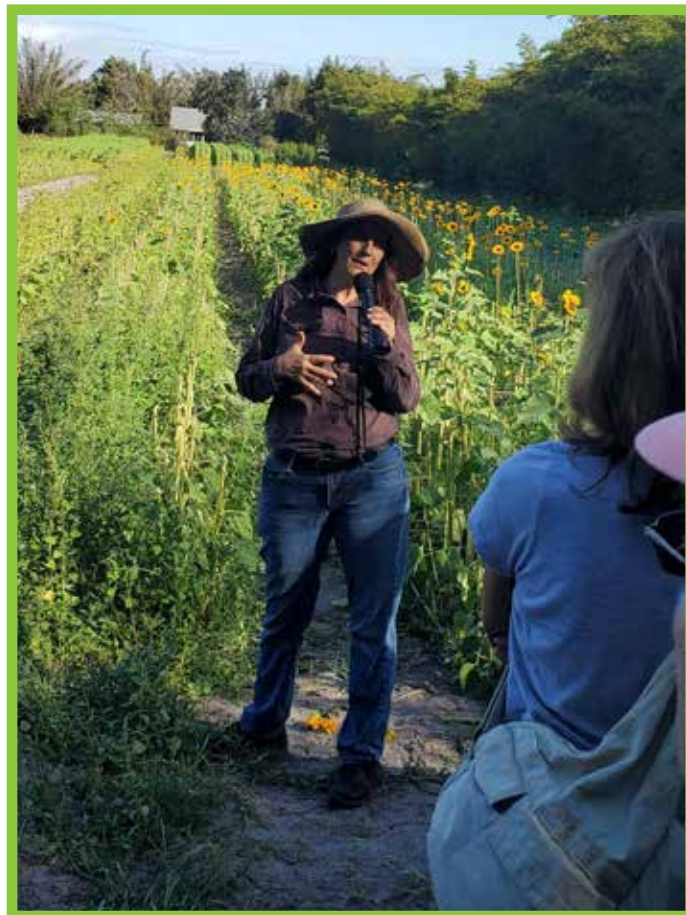
Programs like this after the landscape trauma of Hurricane Ian, helped home gardeners begin to reestablish their landscape with a Florida-Friendly Landscaping approved tree. Providing research-based, unbiased information to our customers is key to our educational outreach approach.



The aftermath of Hurricane Ian left area landscapes blank and needing a restart using Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Principles. One tool for outreach education are tree giveaways. Arbor Day programs are always a great way to reach the public and with the help of a local benefactor, funding was secured to purchase and giveaway 250 Florida Elm Trees.

Ag-Business Tour

The Charlotte County Extension Service offered an opportunity on November 9th for residents to learn about the agro-business tour. The tour provided info about the local agricultural industry, its history, how agriculture affects our economy and see first-hand the production efforts of local farmers in many diverse operations. This year's tour included visits to an organic vegetable farm, a large honeybee operation, a large beef ranch, and a small-scale citrus operation. 2022 statistics show that the total value of farm products sold in Charlotte County alone added up to at least \$67 million.



Forty-five participants were able to not only become more aware of Charlotte County's agricultural “backyard” with on-site visits and dialogues with the farmers, but they also learned more about where their food comes from.

FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE

Work Orders

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Work orders are among several mechanisms that Facilities utilizes to preserve and maintain the county's infrastructure and provide levels of service to BCC departments and constitutional offices. From October 2023 through June 2024, 5,709 Facilities work order requests were submitted. Facilities Management receives work orders generated by two separate systems. Of the 5,709 work orders submitted this fiscal year, 2,999 were received through SharePoint for repair requests from all BCC departments and elected officials. The additional 2,710 work requests were originated by the Sheriff's Spice Works program for repairs at the jail.

The scope of work requested through work orders ranges from carpentry; general labor; plumbing; fire/life/safety; electrical and lighting; and HVAC as well as custodial, preventive maintenance, and various other types of work requests.



Small Projects

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

In addition to responsive and preventive maintenance work orders, Facilities also handles Small Projects. Small Projects are identified within the work order process and are not related to capital improvements. These projects require some form of project management which includes similar aspects of more inclusive large capital project management projects and the use of internal resource labor and services. These are examples of projects completed in FY2024.

Justice Center Mail Room Storefront Upgrade

The Justice Center Mail Room Storefront Upgrade Project was completed to finalize the standardization of the entryways along the hallway that extends from the mail room to the east public entry to the building. The storefront installation included a reconfiguration and consolidation of the door layout improving visibility on both sides which allows for an improved method of receiving deliveries.



CCU Loveland Modular Office Trailers

The Charlotte County Utilities Loveland Modular Office Trailers Project was completed to provide office space for staff displaced from the CCU Eastport A building after Hurricane Ian. The project requirements included space designated for records storage and training in addition to workspaces for 90 staff members. Five buildings were installed providing 15,288 square feet of space.



Major Projects

INFRASTRUCTURE

Fire Station 9 and CCSO District 5

Together in partnership with Babcock Property Holdings LLC and Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners two major projects were developed, designed, and constructed providing additional Life Safety services to Charlotte County. Fire Station 9 is a 12,160 square foot facility with three apparatus bays, 14 bunkrooms, state of the art decontamination rooms, locker and restrooms, exercise and living spaces as well as command offices and a fueling depot.

Charlotte County Sheriff's District 5 Office is an 11,685 square foot facility. Following a design prototype of previous district offices, this new facility will support the growth and enhance the safety and security in the region. In planning for growth, these facilities at Babcock Ranch celebrate the first major milestone of the Master Development Order as well as a commitment to provide exceptional customer service to all county residents and visitors in Babcock Ranch and southern region of the County.



Landfill Scale House

A state-of-the-art scale house was completed at the Charlotte County landfill in early 2024. With updated amenities like a shower, lounge area, lockers, and impact windows, it replaces the trailer that reached the end of



its useful life. The scale house will provide an automated lane for customers who have accounts with current tare weights, eliminating delays in processing customers and supporting the Board's bold goal of efficient and effective government. The enhanced traffic flow in and out of the landfill aids in traffic control within the site. The new site

has three weigh scales with security and monitoring cameras, access control arms, and disposal material accountability.

Explosive growth within our community has already exceeded the capacity of the old scale house. The new location was chosen to plan for expansion as the current footprint is forecasted to reach maximum capacity by 2032. Building the new landfill in its current location will add an approximate additional 50 years taking Charlotte County into the 2080's sustaining the county's anticipated and continued growth.

The project was completed on time within the \$5 million budget.

Public Works JB Yard

The Public Works JB Yard was relocated from Veteran's Boulevard to a new permanent location at 18181 Sinatra Avenue, Port Charlotte. This relocation improves efficiencies for Public Works operations and staff servicing the north county region. The project included workspace for staff, paved parking, site lighting, laydown area, heavy equipment parking, stockpile area, secure fencing, and cameras.



Murdock Ice Tank Farm

The ice tank farm renovation at the Murdock Administration Complex included replacing the sixteen ice tanks with high efficiency tanks made in the USA along with replacing all related pipes and valves. This project allows us to seek a rebate from Florida Power and Light in excess of \$175,000.



Capital Maintenance Plan

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

A Capital Maintenance Plan (CMP) capital project was adopted for FY17 and beyond proving to be an efficient and effective method of planning for deferred maintenance, predictive maintenance, operational improvements, capital repairs and replacements, renovations, and other needed items. Sources of project items include Facility Condition Assessment (FCA) database; former subject-matter based multi-site CIP projects; department-driven needs; and a pro-rated amount for unspecified but predictable needs of non-assessed structures. Budgeted annual funding is provided within the Capital Improvement Projects Fund and allocated to accomplish these projects.

An internal task force of departmental stakeholders reached consensus to utilize a Construction Manager (CM) form of delivery to accomplish most of the work; however, depending on the scope of individual projects, other construction delivery systems may include the use of in-house forces, consultants, and existing annual trades contractors. Funding primarily comes from the Ad Valorem Capital Projects Fund, but depending on the purpose of the individual projects, funding may also be required from a variety of dedicated sources such as Fire Assessments, Gas Tax, Lighting District, Solid Waste, Utility, Transit, and Fleet.

Murdock Generator Replacement Project

The Murdock Administration Complex generator replacement project was an equipment end of life project. This project included replacing two generators in the chiller building with increased capacity generators. Increasing the capacity of these generators eliminated the need for the rooftop generator which was vulnerable to storm damage.



HUMAN RESOURCES

Talent Pipeline Development

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

The Human Resources recruitment team has represented Charlotte County at a variety of events this year to enhance our talent pipeline. Some of these events were niche events with a specific focus such as FSW's Career Day and Charlotte County High School hiring events. Other events have been developed and facilitated by the Human Resources team.



These events included the Careers in Government Day developed in conjunction with Charlotte Technical College as well as the All-County Job Fair held at the Charlotte Harbor Event Center. Additionally, the Human Resources recruitment team remains flexible and ready to respond to individual departments specific talent acquisition

needs by hosting targeted hiring events. These events include “walk-in” days hosted by Community Services and Public Works. These events are individually crafted to fulfill specific hiring needs.

Internships

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

The Human Resources recruitment team have been nurturing and strengthening their relationship with educational institutions within the community. The Human Resources team has successfully built bridges between County staff and students from many different educational programs from high school through higher education.

This summer alone, the Utilities department is hosting a total of 20 high school interns. This program allows local high school students to gain exposure to many different facets of the Utilities department through a

very structured learning experience. The structure of this learning opportunity allows students to engage in a wide array of introductory activities while networking with many different Utilities employees.

Human Resources has also partnered with the Facilities department to develop a structured internship program in collaboration with Charlotte Technical College. Last fall, two CTC students interviewed with Facilities and HR staff and were selected for an internship opportunity. Through an agreement between the County and CTC, these

students earned credit toward graduation for their hours worked in Facilities during their last school term. Upon their graduation from CTC this spring, both students have joined the Facilities



department as full-time employees.

Tyler - Munis Implementation

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Since early 2023, a core team of Human Resources staff have dedicated countless hours immersed in the Tyler-Munis implementation project. The Tyler-Munis software will not only provide upgraded functionality to the payroll software used but will offer the HR team



enhanced functionality in many day-to-day responsibilities such as tracking corrective actions and grievances and the tracking of

certifications and license. This implementation project will also result in a conversion of employee personnel records from their existing electronic format into the Tyler-Munis software. As the implementation project proceeds towards its Jan. 1, 2025 go-live date, additional HR staff will be pulled into the project.

Total Rewards Interactive Tool

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Several members of the Human Resources team successfully launched the Total Rewards Interactive Tool this spring. This long-term project involved the collaboration of HR staff with colleagues from the County's IT department and the County's Risk Management department. The result of staff's collaboration is an interactive tool available to County staff and candidates exploring employment options with the County.

Employees and candidates using the tool can modify varying benefits such as health insurance enrollment options to easily identify the impact on their total compensation package.

Human Resources staff continue to collaborate with other County staff to develop a comprehensive and cohesive approach to the County's total rewards offerings.

Employee Development

The Human Resources team participates in, delivers, and arranges for a variety of employee development opportunities for the County's workforce.

Since September 2023, eight different in-person training opportunities have been offered to the workforce. These trainings included topics such as, Developing and Maintaining Effective Teams, and Conflict Resolution. A total of 132 employees attended the trainings offered.



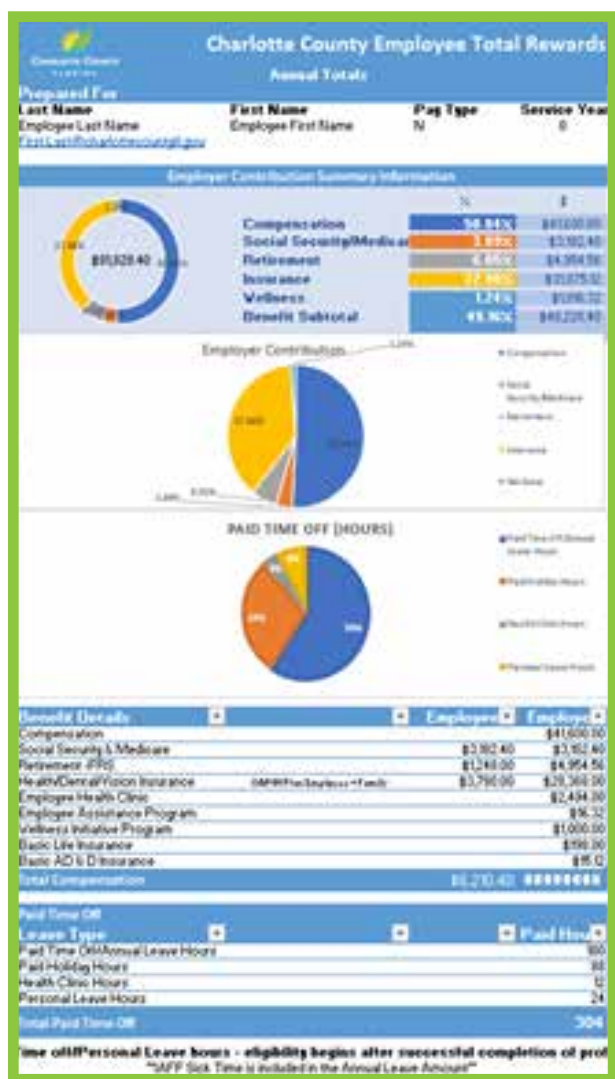
Human Resources staff continue to coordinate and facilitate the Ambassador Program, Management University, and the Leadership Development Program. Since September 2023, The Ambassador program was offered twice. The fall offering of the program resulted in 25 graduates, and the spring program resulted in 24 graduates.

One session of Management University was offered to employees this year. This spring, we had 18 employees complete the requirements to graduate from the Management University program.

The Leadership Development Program was offered to employees twice since September 2023. Last fall's Program resulted in 13 graduates. The current session is comprised of 16 participants.

Graduates of the Ambassador Program, Management University, and the Leadership Development Program, can be called upon to participate in a variety of groups and committees. These groups and committees can be instrumental in gaining insight into the existing workforce and help to drive future direction of the organization.

Human Resources staff have also partnered with departments to deliver specific trainings such as the Fire Officer Training in Public Safety. Public Safety conducted two sessions of their Fire Officer Training since September 2023. Human Resources staff presented an overview of HR related information such as FMLA, corrective actions, and performance appraisal processes.



HUMAN SERVICES

Family Services Center Ribbon Cutting and New Partners

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

The grand opening for Phase 2 of the Family Services Center was held on Feb. 15, 2024 with speeches, ribbon cuttings and songs from some of the Boys & Girls Club participants. Hundreds of residents, community partners, and county staff joined in the festivities. FSC partner agencies provided a “passport” for visitors to get stamped by exploring both buildings and they hosted an expo to provide information about their missions and programs.

The ribbon cutting symbolized the completion of the Family Services Center 6-acre campus which houses a teaching kitchen, sensory room, interview and conference rooms, courtyard, multi-purpose room and community garden. The Center is designed to provide flexible space that can accommodate the needs and services that are most pressing in the community. Both buildings were sales tax projects and house community organizations and non-profits. This year the Community Action Agency Advisory Board (CAAAB) reviewed applications for tenancy and made recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners to provide space for nine new nonprofits, bringing the total number of partner organizations housed in the Family Services Center to 21.

Each partner agency in the FSC provides agency and integration goals and outcomes for the year. These reports include the number of clients served, programs offered and collaborative efforts with other organizations. Agencies participate in required committee meetings and practice trauma-informed care.

Hurricane Ian Recovery

PUBLIC SERVICES

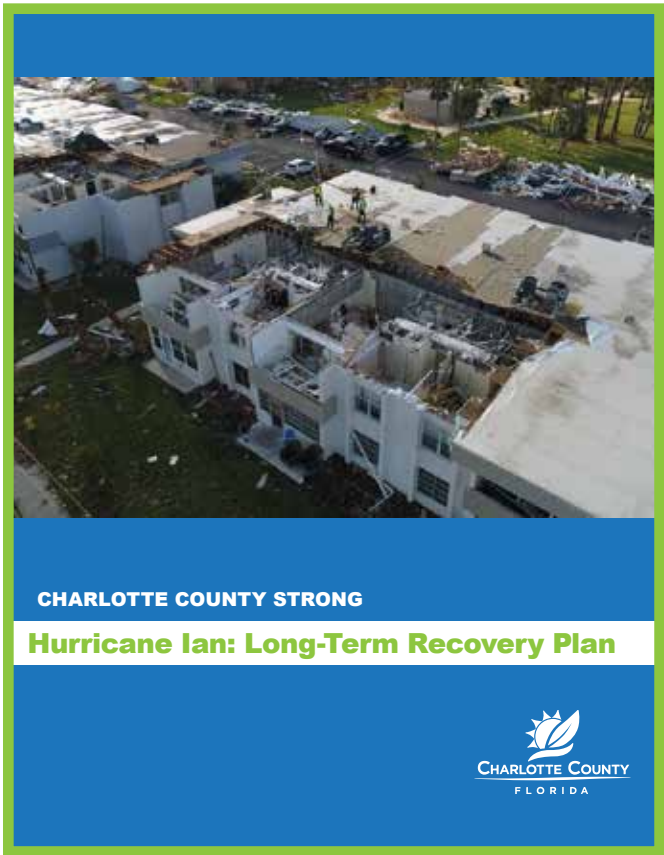
While the Human Services Department plays a part in emergency response in the Emergency Operations Center, the primary role of the department is in long-term recovery.

Human Services is a partner and liaison to Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD). COAD is a critical community collaborative that wraps non-profit, government and faith-based groups around our most vulnerable disaster survivors in the community. Following Hurricane Ian, the COAD launched an online survey that determined the most urgent recovery needs, and then created an online application that connected applicants to the most appropriate agencies. This streamlined approach saves time and effort for the client and allows service providers to leverage their resources. Additionally, the Unmet Needs Committee facilitates a “funding table” for social services and recovery case managers to meet and share client issues and offer assistance for those who may need additional resources.

Human Services staff served on the Long-Term Recovery Steering Committee and helped facilitate the Long-Term Recovery Plan for Charlotte County. A Long-Term Recovery Plan is a shared roadmap for a community to embark on following a disaster. It is not a list of the buildings to be repaired, it is a reimagining of what is possible. It is an opportunity for stakeholders, leaders, and residents to create a vision of what our community could look like: to be more resilient, address critical shortfalls, and restore economic growth. The plan



includes contextual information about Hurricane Ian and its impact on Charlotte County, existing resources, community systems, resident input on priorities and wellbeing, and a list of projects that are recommended for long-term recovery. In addition to the bevy of resources that are normally available to residents in Charlotte County, the department was able to offer additional recovery programs.



Charlotte County Human Services Hurricane Recovery Programs

- SHIP-DR Insurance Deductible Assistance
- SHIP Disaster
- Hurricane Housing Recovery
- Seawall Repair Assistance
- Disaster Intervention Program

Affordable Housing

INFRASTRUCTURE

Prior to Hurricane Ian, affordable and attainable housing in Charlotte County was identified as a critical need and increasing inventory was identified as a bold goal by the Board of County Commissioners. While both the State and

FEMA mobilized resources, the short-term and intermediate housing needs of our community are strained beyond the limit of what we can accommodate. As a result of Hurricane Ian many residents have been displaced. Our most vulnerable populations, specifically low income, disabled and the elderly, have been most impacted. Four low-income senior apartment buildings sustained serious to devastating damages from the storm. Those complexes are being repaired and when completed will offer some relief to survivors.

Since 2020, 188 Affordable units have been completed and added to the housing inventory, 289 units are currently funded and in-progress and 966 affordable housing units have been attempted but were ultimately not funded through the State’s tax credit program or funding was not feasible due to rising costs, interest rates or supply chain issues.

The Verandas III project will come on-line in 2025, adding 72 much needed family units for those earning less than 80% of Area Median Income.



Community Garden

PUBLIC SERVICES

With the completion of the second Family Services Center building came the fruition of the community garden. Instead of opening garden plots to individual residents, partner agencies in the FSC were offered the opportunity to commit to a one-year garden bed term that was tied to programming. The “Dirt Huggers” is comprised of organizations that are combining gardening, watering, and harvesting to their programs. The Boys & Girls Club members and others are planting and tending as a part of learning, harvesting their bounty, and then using the

FSC teaching kitchen to learn cooking, canning, baking and other life skills. Other groups are tying gardening into their group counseling, client engagement, or mentoring. The “Dirt Huggers” meet regularly and received a grant from Tandem Construction for tools and equipment, and Home Depot completed benches and ADA accessible garden bed.



Veterans Services

PUBLIC SERVICES

Charlotte County Veterans Services successfully transitioned from its location at 1100 Loveland Blvd. in Port Charlotte to the Family Service Center at 21500 Gibraltar Drive in Port Charlotte in November of 2023. This change allows for more opportunity for services for Veterans and dependents in Charlotte County.

During the year the Charlotte County Veteran Services Office was busy assisting Veterans and dependents with claims for various benefits such as Service Connected Disabilities, VA Pension, VA Healthcare, VA Home loan certificates, Burial Benefits, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment. This office complete 1176 claims while directly servicing 2328 clients.

The Veteran Services Office conducted over 92 hours of outreach at over 40 community events which engaged over 550 veterans and dependents.

The services provided to the Veterans and dependents of Charlotte County

helps to build the economy and raise the education level of our community by helping to provide access to Federal United States Department of Veterans Affairs benefits as well as state of Florida Department of Veterans Affairs benefits and Charlotte County benefits. Throughout the year, the Veterans of Charlotte County continued to be served by the advocates at the Charlotte County Veteran Services Office.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Animal Control

The Animal Control Division has had a remarkable year, marked by exceptional service to the community and a strong commitment to professional growth and maintaining the highest standards of professionalism. Our team's dedication to the welfare of animals and the safety of our citizens is evident in the numerous accomplishments achieved throughout the year.

We were recognized with the 2023 Cooperative Team Achievement Award from the Florida Animal Protection & Advocacy Association. This award is a testament to our team's collaborative spirit and unwavering commitment to animal welfare. The perfect example of this collaboration and commitment is the success in Animal Control's largest single case to date of 250 animals seized and rehomed.



To enhance our ability to serve the community effectively, several officers undertook professional development opportunities. Two officers became Charlotte County Ambassadors, strengthening our relationships across all departments within the organization. One officer advanced their skills through the Leadership Development program, while our dispatcher improved crisis response by attending the State Agricultural Response Team (SART) Planning Conference. Our team also completed specialized training in areas such as livestock care, mental health first aid, animal rescue, and forensic investigations.

We believe that education is a powerful tool for creating a safer and more compassionate community. Our Senior Officer's participation in the Be-a-Hero program, teaching students about pet safety, is a prime example of our commitment to fostering responsible pet ownership.

Emergency Management

PUBLIC SERVICES

Operations

The past year marked a period of intense activity and significant progress for Charlotte County's Emergency Management Division. Our team was steadfast in its commitment to enhancing community resilience and preparedness for a wide range of disasters.

Development, training, and refinement of comprehensive emergency plans were at the core of our efforts over the year. To ensure a coordinated response, we invested heavily in training over 750 county employees with essential shelter management skills. Concurrently, we conducted a series of rigorous exercises, including a surprise drill, a healthcare facility simulation, a hurricane scenario, and a reunification exercise involving law enforcement and schools. These tests pushed our capabilities and identified areas for improvement.

We had a comprehensive review and update of our existing plans, including, Fuel Plan, Reunification/FAC (ongoing), Unified logistics Plan (ongoing), Mass Care (updates), dormitory/EOC feeding (updates), Recovery, continued Time Delineated Schedule review and updates. This ongoing process guarantees that our plans remain aligned with evolving challenges and best practices.

Proactive mitigation is essential in reducing disaster impacts. Our team successfully secured over \$140 million in grant funding for a variety of mitigation projects. These funds will be instrumental in fortifying our community against future threats.

Recognizing that individuals are at the heart of emergency management, we created a family disaster plan template for both employees and the general public. This resource empowers people to take proactive steps to protect themselves and their loved ones.

To streamline project management, we implemented a robust tracking system, ensuring efficient allocation of resources and timely completion of initiatives.

Hurricane Idalia served as a stark reminder of the importance of preparedness. EM activated swiftly, coordinating response efforts, and securing both Public Assistance and Individual Assistance declarations. This experience underscored the lessons learned from Hurricane Ian and emphasized the value of our training and planning.

Outreach

The Emergency Management Division of Charlotte County spent the past year forging a robust network of preparedness. With a relentless commitment to community safety, the team embarked on a comprehensive outreach campaign, touching the lives of thousands of residents.

The division hosted over 50 public events, with the Division Director personally leading 26 of these engagements. These platforms served as crucial avenues to disseminate vital emergency preparedness information, empowering citizens with the knowledge and tools to weather life's storms.



A cornerstone of this initiative was the “Be a Hero” program, which reached every fourth grader in Charlotte County Public Schools. By instilling emergency preparedness values at a young age, the division invested in the future of the community, cultivating a generation of informed and resilient individuals.

Beyond the local sphere, the division's expertise garnered national recognition. An invitation to address a crowd of 500 floodplain management professionals at the New Jersey Floodplain Managers Conference in Atlantic City underscored Charlotte County's leadership in disaster recovery and mitigation. Sharing the invaluable lessons learned from Hurricane Ian, the division positioned Charlotte County as a beacon of hope and resilience for communities facing similar challenges.

Mutual Aid and Collaboration

In the wake of Hurricane Idalia, the Emergency Management Division demonstrated unwavering commitment to the safety and recovery of our communities. The storm's destructive force wrought havoc upon the Big Bend Region, with Lafayette and Suwannee counties finding themselves in need of supplemental assistance, which was provided through the deployment of our own Emergency Management team.

Through collaborative efforts with local, state, and federal partners, we successfully navigated the challenges posed by the aftermath of Idalia. By leveraging our combined expertise and resources, we were able to assist in the recovery efforts. The resilience demonstrated by our team, coupled with the unwavering support of our partners, was instrumental in our collective success.

Throughout the year, we maintained strong partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies. Regular engagement with community stakeholders, including the Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) and local businesses, fostered collaboration and shared understanding.

Disaster Response - eRole

As the frequency of major disasters rise and the complexity of responses increase with additional population and infrastructure, the need for expanded staffing for disaster specific roles continues to grow. Charlotte County's Hurricane Ian experience highlighted the need for additional staffing and resulted in the creation of Emergency Duty Assignment Policy. This policy designates all county employees essential during an emergency. The eRole database holds important employee information ensuring we utilize county staff in the best way possible during disasters.



Keeping important services running in Charlotte County is crucial for everyone's health and safety, especially during disasters. The eRole annual survey helps make this possible. County employees complete a survey to confirm they know about the Emergency Duty Assignment Policy, update their contact info, and check personal and family disaster plans. Employees also list skills or experiences that could help in a disaster. Supervisors use this information to assign their emergency jobs to do before, during, and after a disaster. Employees get special training for their assigned emergency roles. Over 700 county employees have already received shelter training. The eRole database helps with planning ahead and meeting new needs as they come up, making sure the county can use its workers in the best way possible during disasters creating a safer and stronger community.

Division of Fire & EMS

PUBLIC SERVICES

Operations

This past year has been marked by significant strides in enhancing our department's capacity to serve the community. These accomplishments are a testament to the dedication and hard work of our entire department. We remain committed to building upon these successes and delivering exceptional fire and rescue services.

A key achievement was the development and implementation of the Peak Load Rescue Unit, which became operational on April 8. This critical addition to our fleet has bolstered our ability to respond effectively during peak demand periods.



To ensure comprehensive command-level coverage across our jurisdiction, we made the Battalion 3 position permanent on April 1. This strategic move guarantees optimal leadership presence in the south, mid, and west regions of the county while ensuring appropriate span of control in emergency responses.

Our commitment to providing advanced life support services reached a new milestone on June 5 when Engine 7 achieved ALS certification. This enhancement significantly expands our ability to deliver critical care at the scene of an emergency.

Beyond operational advancements, we have invested in the professional development of our team by participating in the RDSTF Region 6 Drill at JetBlue Park. This valuable training experience sharpened our skills and fostered collaboration with regional partners.

To ensure the safety and efficiency of our operations, we initiated the Station Inspections Project and the Telestaff Optimization process. These initiatives are designed to identify and address potential hazards, optimize staffing levels, and enhance overall operational efficiency.

Finally, the implementation of the FlowMSP Preplan Program represents a proactive approach to emergency response. By meticulously planning for potential incidents, we are better equipped to respond swiftly and effectively when emergencies arise.

Fire Prevention

In our relentless pursuit of a safer community, our Fire Prevention Team has taken a significant stride forward with the implementation of MobileEyes. This efficiency-enhancing software has revolutionized the way we conduct fire inspections, equipping our team with unprecedented tools to identify and mitigate risks.

By fully integrating MobileEyes into our operations on June 1, 2024, we've dramatically enhanced our efficiency and data management capabilities. This mobile platform empowers our inspectors to access critical information in real-time, allowing for faster and more accurate assessments of fire hazards.



The increased functionality offered by MobileEyes has not only streamlined our inspection process but has also provided us with a wealth of data that will inform our prevention strategies and resource allocation. This investment in technology is a testament to our commitment to protecting lives and property.

Training

This past year has been a period of extraordinary growth and development for our entire Department that remains committed to providing the highest level of service to our community while fostering a culture of excellence and innovation. Our success has been due to the unwavering commitment of our Training Division.

With the addition of 49 newly-trained field staff, we've significantly expanded our capacity to serve our community.



To ensure our personnel are equipped with the highest level of expertise, 30 members successfully completed the rigorous 40-hour Officer Development Academy.



The class emphasis is on job performance requirements such as administration functions, human resource management, budgeting, health and safety, emergency service delivery, and mental health awareness. This investment in leadership development is crucial as we strive to cultivate a strong leadership team and capable command structure.

Our dedication to professional advancement is evident in the successful implementation of the Officer Professional Progression Program. This program provides a clear roadmap for our officers to ascend through the ranks, building organizational consistency and ensuring a steady pipeline of talented leaders.

Furthermore, we conducted our annual Promotional Assessment, a competitive process that recognizes and rewards exceptional performance. We are proud to announce the promotion of five firefighters to the rank of Lieutenant. These individuals exemplify the dedication and skill that define our department.

In our ongoing commitment to remaining community and safety focused, we introduced the STARS (Special Needs Tracking and Response) Pediatric Program through partnership with Lee Memorial Healthpark Hospital. This innovative initiative provides specialized training to our personnel in handling pediatric emergencies involving children with special needs. Complementing this program is the implementation of the Handtevy Pediatric System, which offers advanced medical equipment tailored to the unique needs of young patients.

Finally, recognizing the increasing complexity of emergency incidents, we developed comprehensive Mobile Command Unit training. This ensures our teams are prepared to effectively coordinate and manage large-scale operations, enhancing our ability to protect lives and property.

Airport Rescue Fire Fighting (ARFF) Training Simulator

Charlotte County Public Safety's Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) training programs have achieved significant milestones, positioning themselves as a premier training provider in the industry. The introduction of the hybrid ARFF 40-hour class has been particularly noteworthy, offering a comprehensive and flexible approach to training that combines both in-person and online components. This innovative course has seen strong demand, with multiple classes scheduled for the upcoming year. The program's success underscores Charlotte County Public Safety's commitment to advancing firefighter education and preparedness through cutting-edge training methodologies.

Charlotte County Public Safety's ARFF refresher class, an FAA requirement, has been successful and this fall will host several fire departments including Sarasota County Fire, Ocean Reef Fire Rescue, Volusia County Fire Rescue, Palm Beach County Fire Rescue, and Naples Fire-Rescue. The reach and impact of Charlotte County's training programs extend beyond national borders, with interest from international fire departments from Montreal, the Bahamas, and Turks & Caicos. Approximately 50 firefighters



from the Bahamas receive training later this summer. This international interest highlights the reputation and effectiveness of Charlotte County's ARFF training, demonstrating its capability to meet diverse training needs and reinforce global firefighting standards.

EMS Quality Assurance

At the heart of our EMS operations is data. This year, we successfully implemented the NEMSIS 3.5 update, a critical step in enhancing our data collection and reporting capabilities. This upgrade allows us to analyze patient care more comprehensively, identifying trends and areas for improvement with greater precision.

Complementing our data-driven approach, our team meticulously updated and implemented new medical protocols. These evidence-based guidelines ensure our paramedics and EMTs are equipped with the latest advancements in prehospital care. This commitment to staying at the forefront of medical knowledge directly impacts the quality of care our community receives.

Our department has been awarded the AHA Mission Lifeline Gold Award. This prestigious recognition underscores our unwavering dedication to providing the highest quality cardiac care. It is a testament to the hard work and expertise of our EMS personnel.



Finally, our Quality Improvement program underwent a comprehensive revision. This process involved a deep dive into our operations to identify opportunities for enhancement. By systematically analyzing our performance, we have developed and implemented strategies to optimize patient outcomes and operational efficiency.

The work of our EMS Quality Assurance Division is instrumental in shaping our department into a high-performing organization. Their efforts not only improve patient care but also enhance the safety and well-being of our community.

Radio Communications

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Radio Communications Interoperability

In 2020, all the counties in region 6, including our immediate neighbors in Sarasota, DeSoto and Lee Counties, converted to the P25 digital system, which was adopted as the national standard after 9/11 terrorist attacks.

In June 2022, staff began work with with radio system managers and fire department stakeholders in our region to discuss and plan improved radio communications and interoperability. Today, we have six participating counties and approximately 8,600 fire department radios sharing standardized channel lists with each other. Including law enforcement radios is the next goal. When completed, firefighters and law enforcement officers in our region will simply switch to an authorized channel using their own department-issued radios, and be able to communicate with the mutual aid command.



We have completed the Mobile Command Center radio communications project, with only the consoles awaiting procurement from CCSO's I.T. department for computer acquisition. This boosts our capabilities for seamless communication in critical situations.

We commenced revenue collection from Verizon Wireless as a new customer at the Stadium radio tower site.

We have established an agreement with the Charlotte County school board to oversee the maintenance of 20 school campus repeater systems and approximately 1000 portable radios, ensuring reliable communication within educational institutions.

We have progressed towards the procurement of MCM Commshop Solutions radio communications asset tracking and project management software, facilitating streamlined operations and resource optimization.

those materials through licensed companies. Additionally, county staff educates and provides guidance to the businesses regarding the proper handling and disposal of their waste materials.



New Landfill Scale House

Construction of the new scale house was finished and turned over to the Solid Waste division and is now fully operational. The new scale house provides express automated lanes for customers such as the City of Punta Gorda and Waste Management. It allows these businesses to enter and exit via the automated lanes without having to wait to be processed. The old scale house location retains one scale to be used for future natural disaster events by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) staff and other contractors. This will provide them an adequate location to process and monitor storm related debris without hampering normal scale house operations and improves traffic flow in post storm events.



Engineering

INFRASTRUCTURE

Hurricane Ian Waterway Debris Clearing

To date, we have removed 38,575 tons of Hurricane Ian debris from the freshwater canals and primary ditches throughout Charlotte County. We have completed 200 miles of waterway and still have another 100 miles to complete. Cleanup is anticipated to continue until November 2024. We have received \$20.8M in federal funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to complete this work. We also have removed 81 tons from navigable waterways before the State took over the program.

Kings Highway Pathway

This 10-foot wide pathway stretches for 3200 feet along Kings Highway gives pedestrians and bicyclists a safe connection through this Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Right of Way from Veterans Boulevard to Sandhill Boulevard. Twelve pedestrian signals were included along the pathway. Residential and commercial areas with pedestrian signals were also installed at the on and off ramps of I-75 and Sandhill Boulevard. This pathway makes Greater Port Charlotte and Deep Creek a more walkable community and provides a safe place to be active. The Board of County Commissioners has placed an emphasis on infrastructure throughout the county and this project highlights that goal to enhance an area while making it a safer and better place to live.



Bridge Maintenance Program

The Engineering division has been actively working on the revitalization of the Tom Adams Bridge. This rehabilitation project will bring about improvements in visibility, aesthetics, pedestrian access, and traffic management for a better crossing experience.



Traffic, Signs, and Marking

INFRASTRUCTURE

Gillot Boulevard and Holton Terrace Intersection

The intersection of Gillot Boulevard and Holton Terrace near the McCall Road traffic light has recently proven to be a problem area for traffic congestion. Vehicles awaiting that light on Gillot Boulevard and McCall Road will often back up enough to block the Gillot/Holton crossing, making it impassable until after a traffic light cycle. To help resolve this issue, Traffic, Signs and Marking installed an oversized “Do Not Block” legend within the travel lane.



Lighting

INFRASTRUCTURE

LED Conversion Project

The Board approved the Lighting District’s Annual LED Light fixture contract on Feb. 27, 2024. Out of the 1,245 High-Pressure Sodium (HPS) fixtures maintained, 60 have been replaced with LED fixtures. Rampart Boulevard has been 100% completed as a part of this process, and 120 more LED fixtures have been ordered for Placida Road, which will be the next area crews will focus on.



Maintenance & Operations

INFRASTRUCTURE

169 Robina Street – Outfall Pipe Installation

There were significant erosion issues on the property at 169 Robina Street. Staff conducted an investigation and with the help of our engineering division it was determined a large drainage pipe needed to be installed to prevent future erosion. Crew members worked diligently to install the new pipes and now the yard has stability and the resident “is worry free of any erosion.”



Veterans Boulevard and Kings Highway Intersection

Public Works staff responded to a report of a depression forming in the roadway (a resident reported the issue on Facebook). The depression gradually became worse, so staff closed the small section of road (depicted below) and began work to open excavate the area. It was determined the depression was caused by a failing stormwater pipe. Staff conducted a point repair (installed a new piece of pipe), re-compacted the area, and placed an overlay of asphalt.



Business Services

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Trainings

So far this year, we have over 3,000 hours of training within Public Works. We are investing in our employees by hosting various types of trainings such as: hands-on equipment training, emergency and disaster response, safety trainings including CPR/First Aid/AED for adults and pediatrics, Commercial Driver's License, varying levels of Maintenance of Traffic, and soft skills such as time management, Robert's Rules of Order, and peer-to-peer training opportunities.

As we continuously build this training program, we keep the Board's strategic focus areas top of mind so we can create a well-rounded, trained, and skilled workforce to better serve our community.



Public Relations - Community Outreach Day

On April 20, 2024 Public Works hosted our annual Community Outreach event at Centennial Park. Residents of all ages were invited to come out for a day of hands-on learning and interactive fun! With an attendance count of over 1,000 people, this event provided an opportunity for the locals to get a better understanding of the Public Works initiatives and the impact it has on our surrounding area.



TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor & Convention Bureau

PUBLIC SERVICES

Throughout FY 2024, tourism in Charlotte County has continued to recover from the aftermath of Hurricane Ian, although two hotels, the Punta Gorda Waterfront and the Holiday Inn Express-Port Charlotte which represent over 250 rooms, have been closed and are not expected to re-open. In addition, due to ongoing inflation as well as a shift among U.S. travelers this year to satisfy pent-up demand for international travel, tourism in the U.S. has experienced some softening in inbound travel, particularly in the lower to mid-price hotel sector.

On a positive note, the opening of Sunseeker Resort in December, which helped mitigate the loss of room inventory, has helped to boost tourism the past few months. Also, recent national traveler sentiment surveys seem to indicate fewer U.S. travelers are citing that their personal financial situation is having an effect on the number of trips they plan to take over the next six months, while slightly more are indicating they will spend less on lodging and food & beverage in the coming months. Looking slightly ahead, forecasts predict that leisure travel demand will see moderate growth as we head into 2025, while group and business travel will remain strong.

Also, our most recent quarterly research report, which covered the months of January-March 2024 indicated an increase in number of visitors (+0.7%), economic impact (+11.9%) and Tourist Development Tax (TDT) collections (+24.5%) compared to the same quarter last year. At the same time, we saw a slight decrease in occupancy % (-3.1%), which is a modest decrease given the influx of 785 new lodging units into the destination. As of the latest collections (through April), our TDT is up 14.6% year-to-date and we've experienced positive monthly growth in this metric for the past 5 months.

Lastly, our most recent annual report showed tourism expenditures generated over \$1 billion in economic impact for the 2nd straight year, supported nearly 13,000 jobs in our community and saved the average household \$1,026 off their annual tax liability helping to satisfy the Board's strategic focus area of Economic and Community Development.

Leisure/Travel Trade Market Development

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor and Convention Bureau has made significant strides in their first year of expanding the destination's reach to international markets with the services of international representation firms for the German and United Kingdom markets. These firms act as an extension of our office, enhancing our brand awareness, and showcasing the unique assets we offer to potential international visitors. This initiative aligns with our overall mission to generate business through earned media, tour operator education, and comprehensive marketing initiatives.

Domestic Leisure Sales Efforts

In addition to our international sales and marketing efforts, staff continued to focus on domestic leisure sales. Key activities in FY 2024 included attending AAA Travel Show, and Travel & Adventure consumer shows in major markets such as Chicago, Columbus, and Washington D.C. These events provided valuable opportunities to engage with tens of thousands of vacation shoppers and travel agents, resulting in the distribution of over 2,000 visitor guides.



International Sales Efforts

With the assistance of our international representation firms, the Tourism Development office focused initial efforts on brand awareness in the German and UK markets through face-to-face meetings, trainings, familiarization initiatives, and co-op opportunities. Key events attended include Florida Huddle, World Travel Market, ITB, IPW and Unite which allowed staff to meet face-to-face with key decision-makers in the travel trade industry to educate them on our destination's assets and amenities. The Tourism Development office collaborated with various local industry partners to host FAMS (Familiarization Trips) and trainings with dozens of US receptive tour operators, international tour operators, and travel agents to better familiarize them with our destination, aiding them in selling our product to their consumers. The response from international tour operators and agents was overwhelmingly positive, as they were excited to learn about a lesser-known Florida destination to share with their clients for future travel needs.

Impact and Future Goals

Continuing to increase awareness of our destination through face-to-face meetings, trainings, co-op opportunities, familiarization trips, and providing customized information has proven to be highly effective. These efforts are crucial in attracting the nearly one million travelers who visit Charlotte County annually. Our goal is to continue to increase domestic travel as well as inbound travel from the UK and German markets, and to expand our reach into Austria in FY 2025 and the Republic of Ireland in FY 2027.

Marketing

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

As the Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach area continues to grow in popularity, so do the Tourism Development office's efforts to attract visitors with a high household income who generate a greater economic impact. Those visitors tend to come from farther away and stay longer. We continue to market to the areas that we have significant visitation and lift from like the Northeast and Midwest regions of the U.S and southeast drive markets. We've expanded our international efforts to focus on growing awareness and highlighting our unique selling points that resonate with international travelers to Florida by leaning into an off-the-beaten-path destination that abounds in water and nature-based activities and amenities (a respite from theme parks and big cities). Our geographic focus is the United Kingdom, Germany, and Canada. As part of these efforts, the marketing department is in the

final stages of development of a German-language Visitor Guide which will be utilized at consumer trade shows abroad as well as a tool to educate media and travel trade professionals throughout Germany.

This year the Tourism Development office expanded its email marketing efforts with additional vendors and distribution. The format has been enhanced to include a video component to each monthly send, corresponding with the topic of the email. For example, golf, family, meetings, girls' getaways, and weddings.



As host city to the upcoming U.S. Sports Congress, a gathering of top tier rights-holders in amateur sports, staff worked with our creative agency to develop a teaser video that can be used to either excite attendees to a future event being held here or to influence an organizer's decision to bring their event to Charlotte County. This 3-minute video (youtu.be/sTn5LTpQ7w), which showcases all of Charlotte County, received rave reviews, with the organizer of the conference indicating it was the best presentation for a host city ever!

This year the Tourism Development office expanded on its marketing tactics by venturing into a dedicated mobile-only marketing campaign with Aki Technologies. Aki specializes in serving rich media interstitials using moment technology. Ads are served at different times of day, according to behavior such as weekend downtime moment, relaxing after work moment, after dinner moment, prime time TV moment, and afternoons at home moment. Aki Rich Media Interstitial CTR Benchmark Range is 0.55% - 1.23%. Our creative is continuing to significantly exceed Aki CTR Benchmark Range at over 2% and prompting a strong click volume to the Tourism Development website www.PureFlorida.com.



Due to the office being flooded and furniture destroyed, Hurricane Ian afforded us the opportunity to renovate and enhance the Visitor Center (and staff offices) to better reflect the Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach brand.



The office is now light, bright and welcoming with our brand colors on display and some of our unique selling points and activities featured in large format canvases and props on the walls. The tourism office hosted an open house on June 12 to show off the new space and network with approximately three dozen industry partners and other county staff.

Meetings & Conventions

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

With the opening of Sunseeker Resort Charlotte Harbor, the meetings market in Charlotte County took a giant leap forward. Between the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center and Sunseeker, the county offers well over 100k square feet of meeting space for meetings, conventions, and events. Meeting planners now have the additional option to place a large convention and attendee hotel rooms under one roof. Results can be seen in the number of rooms booked and the economic impact from those events the Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor & Convention Bureau assisted with securing in Fiscal Year 2024 YTD through June 30.



Industry meetings/tradeshows in August will give us opportunities to promote our destination for future business and we have been working hard with our partners to put our best foot forward. Hosted by Sunseeker, the Prevue Meet Well Summit on August 7-9 brought 30 meeting planners with active RFPs. The Thursday evening event included a dine around at Fishermen's Village highlighting Captain's Table and Village Brewhouse, with dessert onboard King Fisher Fleet for a sunset cruise. Fourteen planners stayed an additional day to learn even more about Peace River Botanical and Sculpture Gardens, Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center, the Wyvern, Four Points by Sheraton Punta Gorda Harborside and Punta Gorda Adventures.

Public Relations and Social Media

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Public relations and social media metrics have seen positive growth again this year due to our international marketing and public relations efforts, the new Sunseeker Resort opening, renovation of the Manasota Key Resort, and additional reopening of lodging, restaurant, and other hospitality business establishments from Hurricane Ian. The Tourism Development office hosted over 60 journalists and travel writers from areas such as Brazil, Scotland, Germany, Canada, Ohio, Wisconsin, etc. to promote our destination domestically and internationally. We also hosted journalists who are local Floridians to promote staycations.

These hosted press trips provide a great opportunity for our partners to showcase their business on various social media platforms as well as printed and digital publications with minimal to no investment.



The goal of our public relations and social media efforts is to increase the awareness of our destination and subsequently our visitation numbers, especially during the shoulder season, to support all of our local tourism industry partners.

The biggest highlight of the year was an article with Southern Living featuring the 14 best things to do in Punta Gorda! For very little money spent, this article had an ad equivalency of \$793.2K and a total readership of 421,900,135.

Tourism Development also hosted a German film crew to gather content for a documentary highlighting and promoting Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach to over 2 million viewers on a variety of broadcast and streaming platforms throughout Germany. The finished product began airing in August 2024.



Staff continues to build relationships with new journalists and travel writers by attending conferences such as the North America Travel Journalists Association, Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers, and others to increase our exposure both domestically and internationally.

Sports Market Development

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

After having a portion of our sports facilities compromised due to Hurricane Ian, it was imperative to balance the tournaments and local league activity in order to get Charlotte County back into hosting regular sports tournaments and events. This was achieved by having the sports department of the Tourism Development office focus on non-traditional sports that would not overcommit County facilities that at the time were being repaired. Below is an example of these non-traditional sports that still enhanced the quality of life for our residents by providing them an opportunity to participate or come cheer as a fan. These events continued to provide economic impact and support to our local hotels, restaurants, and attractions.

Unique Non-Traditional Sporting Events Hosted

- American Kennel Association Dog Agility Trials
- American Kennel Association Dock Diving Competition
- Turtle Trot 5K Sand Beach Race
- USA BMX Citrus Nationals
- 24/48-Hour Ultra Adventure Race
- 8 -Hour Ultra Marathon & 5K Preserve Race
- Elite Events Half Marathon & 5K
- FlatsMaster Fishing Blind Draw Winter Series
- American Cornhole Organization Gulf Coast Classic Pro-Invitational
- Nike International Pickleball Camp
- NCAA College Winter Swim & Diving Team Training

Showcased Sporting Events Hosted

- Snowbird Baseball Classic - NCAA Division I and Division III regular season games
 - 30 Teams- Livestream Broadcast Games
 - 7,374 Room Nights Booked
 - \$11 Million Economic Impact
- Association of Pickleball Players – Sunmed Punta Gorda Open
 - 1,300 Participants
 - \$4.3 Million Economic Impact
 - Championship Broadcast on CBS Sports & ESPN
- American Cornhole Organization – Gulf Coast Classic & Pro-Invitational
 - 1,134 Room Nights
 - \$1.1 Million Economic Impact
 - 160,000 Live Stream Broadcast Views & Engagements

Total Amateur & Collegiate Sports Event Impact

- 63 Tournament/Events Hosted
- 16 Different Sports
- 38,000 Room Nights Booked
- \$45 Million Economic Impact



UTILITIES

American Public Works Association Accreditation Certification Achieved

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

The Utilities Department received full accreditation from the American Public Works Association (APWA) in November 2023. This accreditation formally verifies and recognizes that the agency is in full compliance with the recommended management practices set forth in APWA's Public Works Management Practices Manual.



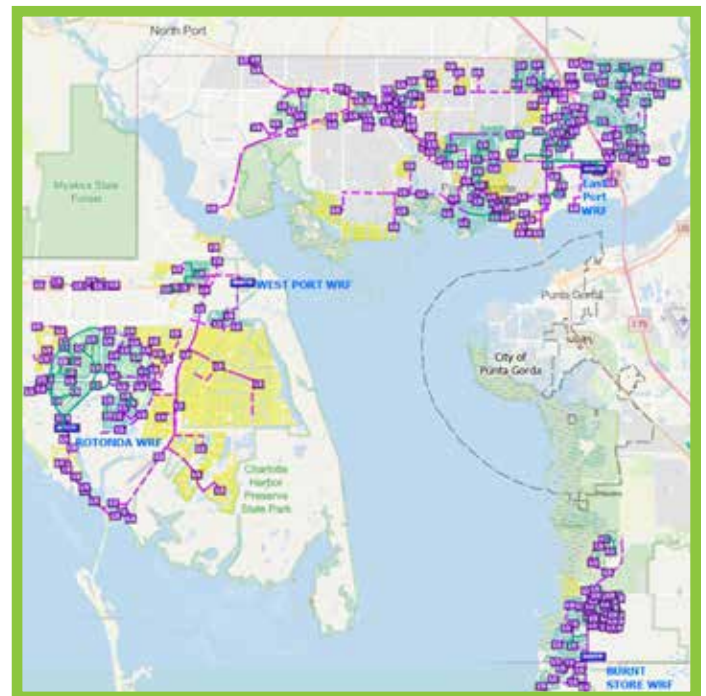
The purpose of accreditation is to promote excellence in the operation and management of a public works agency, its programs, and its employees. Accreditation is designed to assist the agency in the continuous improvement

of operations and management, and in providing a valid and objective evaluation of agency programs as a service to the public and the profession.

The Utilities Department joins twenty-five other accredited agencies in the State of Florida and 200 agencies in the United States and Canada.

Capacity Assessment and Assurance Program (CAAP) Framework Development and Pilot Flow Monitoring Program Creation

INFRASTRUCTURE



The Capacity Assessment and Assurance Program (CAAP) Framework Development and Flow Monitoring

Pilot Program aims to create a framework document for an initial desktop collection system. This document will outline all the steps needed to thoroughly evaluate the wastewater collection system and provide valuable tools to identify opportunities to reduce and mitigate sanitary sewer overflows. The program will also establish a roadmap for future flow monitoring studies necessary to assess the performance of the wastewater collection system.



Water Quality Improvement Projects (Septic-to-Sewer)

INFRASTRUCTURE

The Ackerman project began in April 2021. The vacuum station is fully operational, and the water main replacement and vacuum sewer for Zones 1 and 2 have been completed, with on-lot connections currently in progress with 335 connections made as of July 2023. Zones 3 and 4 and the Low-Pressure Sewer section have been fully designed and are expected to be put out to bid in the fall of 2024.

The project is anticipated to be finished by 2027, and around 1,800 properties will be transitioned from septic to the central sewer system.



The Lakeview Midway project is currently in the design phase. It will serve approximately 2,220 properties by transitioning them from septic to the central sewer. The project also involves the installation of new water service lines and a vacuum station. Construction is expected to commence in 2026.



Summer High School Internship Program

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Utilities Department worked with the local high schools to promote the Summer High School Internship program. In its fourth year, the program had the highest level of participation to date. Due to increased interest, we changed the structure from one six-week session to two four-week sessions, allowing 17 participants instead of the previous eight. The program provided students with hands-on experience in water distribution, maintenance services, treatment facilities, engineering construction, and wastewater collection. The students provided valuable feedback, and numerous showed interest in working for the department after graduation.





Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Program

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

The Utilities Department is deeply committed to effectively managing Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) to safeguard our community's infrastructure and the environment. The FOG program was specifically designed to enlighten, regulate, and collaborate with our community to ensure the establishment of a cleaner, more sustainable future.



The FOG program addresses the complexities associated with common kitchen byproducts and advocates for sustainable practices among our residents and businesses. Throughout the year,

we actively engaged in community outreach events to communicate valuable knowledge to the public which included a FOG informational session specifically tailored for a housing complex. Additionally, we launched a FOG website (CharlotteCountyFL.gov/FOG) that offers essential information for our residents and businesses.

Water and Wastewater Facility Plant Tours

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

This year, the Utilities Department added an exciting twist to our spring water and wastewater plant tours by introducing the H₂O Harmony Facility Tour. We offered guided tours to residents at three of our water and wastewater treatment facilities, providing an in-depth, behind-the-scenes experience showcasing the intricacies of water and wastewater treatment and reclamation services. We also coordinated a tour for residents to visit the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Authority, the primary supplier of over 95% of drinking water to Charlotte County. Our outreach efforts this year resulted in an increased level of participation compared to the previous five years, with a few tour dates "selling out." We take immense pride in the positive impact that our tours have had on the community and eagerly anticipate welcoming even more visitors in the upcoming year.



