

County forecaster predicts continued record growth

By Hector Flores

The Charlotte County Commission was recently presented with growth statistics and forecasts by the consulting firm Metro Forecasting Models.

The firm's findings based on the two most recent population reports, permitting statistics and other data found that Charlotte County grew by 5.2% from June 2023 to March 2024. More than 5,000 new housing units have been permitted and constructed since June 2023. For all of 2024, the county is on pace to permit 4,400 housing units.

The county is forecast to have a population of 212,424 by the end of 2024. In the 2020 U.S. Census, the population was 186,847. That represents a 13.6% increase in population in four years. With about 20,000 housing units expected to be constructed by the end of the decade, our population is projected to be 251,879, a 34.8% increase in a decade.

The consultant breaks down the county by six regions to track trends. The regions are Babcock Ranch, Burnt Store Road, East, Mid, Punta Gorda and West. At Babcock Ranch alone, forecasts predict it will reach 9,246 housing units by 2030. The first resident moved in to Babcock Ranch in 2018.

The Mid region, which includes the new community of West Port in the Murdock Village Community Redevelopment Area, completed nearly 1,000 housing units since 2023. Metro Forecasting foresees 28% of new residents living in the West Port community through 2024 and 33% in Babcock Ranch. Babcock Ranch and West Port have accounted for 82% of all residential construction since 2023 and that trend is forecast to continue.

Of course, population growth puts pressure on the city and county to continue to provide needed services and facilities, such as fire stations, parks, libraries and transportation infrastructure. It also creates opportunities for private sector companies to develop commercial sites for stores, food services, offices, manufacturing, distribution centers and medical facilities.

To view the full presentation, visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov/cctv and click the Video On-Demand Archives button, then click the link to the Board of County Commissioners Regular Meeting video for Nov. 12, 2024.

Debris collection

The county's debris contractor has now collected more than 200,000 cubic yards of construction, demolition and vegetative debris. That's enough to cover more than 11 football fields 10 feet high.

The West County Mini-Transfer and Recycling Facility at 7070 Environmental Way in Englewood is now open 8 a.m.-3:45 p.m., Tuesdays through Saturdays. The Mid-County Mini-

Transfer and Recycling Facility at 19765 Kenilworth Blvd. in Port Charlotte will be open 24 hours, seven days a week until further notice.

For the latest storm recovery information about assistance, facility status and debris collection, visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click the Storm & Recovery banner at the top of the page.

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