

County launches recovery and resiliency initiative

By Hector Flores

Having been impacted by multiple hurricanes over the past three years, Charlotte County has made it a priority to ramp up efforts to be more resilient. The means not just hardening structures, but providing training, resources and mental health services to our employees. It also extends to our natural resources, such as our beaches and waterways, which were severely affected by the recent storms. Last, but not least, we want the members of our community to be resilient, so we'll be emphasizing protective measures and personal safety in our preparedness messaging in the run-up to the next hurricane season, which begins June 1. Being more resilient will help us to recover from future storms by limiting impacts and having the resources and training to build back.

On Tuesday dozens of senior staff and administration officials met to kick off a new recovery and resiliency initiative that will include every department in the county. Emergency Management Director Patrick Fuller outlined his vision for developing a structure and procedures that best position the county to recover from future storms and take steps to lessen our vulnerability. He identified five goals for the initiative:

- Foster a culture of preparedness that embraces resiliency in every we do.
- Enhance the overall resiliency of our organization and community through a coordinated recovery process.
- Create standards and processes that streamline our recovery and meet the requirements of external agencies.
- Use the collective knowledge and resources of the organization to overcome obstacles.
- Create solutions and leverage best practices that eliminate or reduce the impacts of future disasters through mitigation efforts.

Each department will appoint a liaison to the recovery and resiliency group that will meet regularly to identify areas of responsibilities, available resources, and training opportunities. The liaisons will report back to their chain of command and document progress on new initiatives.

We have a good head start due to our recent experiences and we have filed applications for tens of millions of dollars in grants to fund generators, safe rooms, an expansion to the Emergency Operations Center and more. We can only hope these investments and this new initiative will not be needed, but our geographical location and the growing frequency tropical weather make it imperative to prepare.

Plant tours

The Charlotte County Utilities Department is offering tours of two facilities to give citizens a behind-the-scenes look at the process involved in providing water and wastewater treatment and reclamation services to the community.

Tour dates are as follows: Peace River Water Treatment Facility, 8998 SW County Road 769, Arcadia, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Friday, March 28; Rotonda Water Reclamation Facility, 3740 Kendall Road, Rotonda West, Tuesday, April 15, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Please email CCUPR@CharlotteCountyFL.gov or call 941-764-4304 to request a reservation.

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