

Infrastructure Upgrades to Meet Future Needs

By Stu Gooden

Charlotte County is growing fast. By 2030, our population is projected to increase to 250,000 people. An influx of younger families, a surge in small business and sustained tourism are all expected to increase the need for adequate infrastructure and public services.

The Utilities Department is supporting this transformation by ensuring reliable services meet the community's needs now and in the future. The health, safety, environmental sustainability and economic prosperity of the county depend on reliable access to and responsible management of water.

We're proactively expanding our water reclamation system, which treats wastewater and turns it into high-quality reclaimed water that nourishes the environment, beautifies the community and reduces demand of potable water. Charlotte County has four water reclamation facilities that perform this important work.

The East Port Water Reclamation Facility is currently undergoing expansion. Serving homes and businesses in Mid-County, this initiative will increase wastewater treatment capacity from six million gallons per day to nine million gallons per day. The expansion features the addition of advanced wastewater treatment, a process that removes contaminants and pollutants from wastewater to produce higher quality reclaimed water. Construction is expected to be completed by early 2027.

Serving customers in South County, the Burnt Store Water Reclamation Facility is planned for expansion to keep up with the exponential growth of new construction in the area. In October, the County Commission approved an engineering consultant's recommended design to increase capacity with a pre-assembled "packaged" plant. This facility will immediately boost wastewater treatment at the existing plant site to meet Burnt Store's needs. The board also supported a permanent solution to increase plant capacity from half a million gallons per day to one million gallons per day. Engineering design of a long-term facility is underway.

Plans are also being developed to expand the West Port and Rotonda Water Reclamation Facilities.

Located just west of the Myakka River, the West Port facility was last upgraded in 2004. During that time, West County has experienced tremendous growth with new communities that increased demand for wastewater treatment.

In Rotonda West, more than 10,000 residents rely on its local reclamation facility to safely process wastewater. Rated to treat two million gallons of wastewater per day, this plant uses special technology to produce high-quality effluent reclaimed water. Both facilities are slated for improvements in the future.

The distribution of potable water and treatment of wastewater are essential parts of a healthy, safe and thriving community. The Utilities Department is honored to deliver these services to customers and enhance infrastructure to meet the community's needs for future generations.

For more information about initiatives to improve water services, read the utilities strategic plan at www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov/Utilities. Stay connected by following us on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/CCUtilities and learn how to participate in public tours of our facilities this winter.

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