

County Commission breaks ground on sales tax projects

By Hector Flores

The Charlotte County Commission this week held groundbreaking ceremonies for three 1% local option sales tax projects. Two events were held on Tuesday to mark the beginning of construction on improvements to the William R. Gaines Jr., Veterans Memorial Park and Fire & EMS Station 17. The third event was held on Thursday at Fire & EMS Station 6.

Voters approved the funding for the project during a referendum held on Nov. 3, 2020, with 67% of voters saying yes to the extension of the sales tax for six years.

Gaines Park was renamed to honor a Charlotte County resident killed in the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon while serving with the U.S. contingent of the multinational peacekeeping force. The project will include four new pickleball courts, a spacious pavilion for gatherings, and critical infrastructure upgrades connecting restroom facilities to the sanitary sewer system. The park is located off Edgewater Drive across from the Spring Lake Park boat ramp.

Fire Station 17, located off U.S. 41 south of Punta Gorda, will be the newest addition to the department's facility inventory. Due to rapid growth and development near Tucker's Grade, the county requires the new fire station to maintain the current level of service to its residents. Fire Station 17 will be a 13,000-square-foot hardened facility with a four-stall apparatus bay including a battalion chief, lieutenant and 12 Fire/EMS staff bunk rooms.

Fire Station 6 will replace the existing station nearby off Duncan Road east of Punta Gorda. The existing Fire Station 6 is undersized for current and future needs. New Fire Station 6 will be a 9,700-square-foot hardened facility with a three-stall apparatus bay including a lieutenant and eight Fire/EMS staff bunk rooms.

I want to thank voters for their support of the sales tax referendum, which enables the county to build critical infrastructure and quality of life amenities. Charlotte County Public Schools and the City of Punta Gorda also receive a portion of the revenues for projects they undertake. Last week, the County Commission voted to put a referendum on the Nov. 3, 2026 ballot to extend the 1% local option sales tax for 20 years to fund 56 county and school infrastructure, public safety, utilities, and quality of life projects.

For more information about the recently started projects and past and future projects, visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov/salestax.

Readers may reach Charlotte County Administrator Hector Flores at Hector.Flores@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.