

County employees receive recognition for service

By Hector Flores

It's always a pleasure to share with you my colleagues' accomplishments. Their commitment to delivering exceptional service is exemplified by the recognition they receive from their peers and professional associations.

Four Fire & EMS personnel were honored as employees of the year for their heroic actions responding to a house fire in May 2025. Lt. Mike Brucci, Lt. Kelly Lechleidner, Lt. Jefferson Mendel, and Firemedic River Silva saved four residents from a fire that killed two of their housemates. Earlier this year, Mendel was recognized as officer of the year.

Charlotte County Fire & EMS also this month received the American Heart Association's Mission: Lifeline EMS Gold Achievement Award for its commitment to offering rapid, research-based care to people experiencing the most severe forms of heart attacks and strokes, ultimately helping save lives and improve patient outcomes across the community.

The department focuses on improving systems of care for time-sensitive medical emergencies, including ST-elevation myocardial infarctions and strokes. The program emphasizes coordinated care from the moment a 911 call is placed through EMS treatment and hospital care, ensuring patients receive lifesaving interventions as quickly as possible.

Public Safety Department Public Relations Manager Ashley Turner this week received the Economic Development Office's 40 Under 40 Award for her service to the community.

Turner began working for Charlotte County in 2018 and has continued to grow in her career while staying involved in the community. She has coached youth basketball, served on an academic advisory board and participated in outreach events that connect residents, students and families with local opportunities.

Charlotte County's 40 Under 40 program highlights professionals who are leading, serving and contributing to the region's long-term success. Through Careers on the Coast, the program helps tell the story of Charlotte County as a community where young talent can thrive.

At Tuesday's County Commission meeting, staff from the Rotonda Water Reclamation Facility proudly accepted the Earle B. Phelps Award from the Florida Water Environment Association for the plant's performance in wastewater treatment. The data-based award recognized the performance of the plant in treating wastewater and producing high-quality reclaimed water.

FWEA Board Member Dustin Phelps said the award requires a utility to achieve the "highest benchmarks in operational performance" and an "elite level of daily process controls and a team that refuses to compromise on quality."

Congratulations to everyone mentioned above and thank you for your commitment to serving the people of Charlotte County.

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