

## **April is National County Government Month**

By Hector Flores

Charlotte County will be celebrating National County Government Month in April to showcase how the county delivers exceptional service to fulfill the County Commission's vision to preserve and enrich our community's quality of life for those who live, work and play in our paradise.

On Tuesday, the commission adopted a proclamation designating April as National County Government Month to raise awareness of Charlotte County's responsibilities, programs and services. The theme for this year's celebration is "Counties THRIVE," demonstrating how counties help to improve people's lives every day.

The past couple of years have put our commitment to our community to the test with our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We innovated our service delivery to keep customers safe without compromising services. For example, our NACo award-winning digital plans program was implemented seamlessly by the Community Development to enable contractors and homeowners to submit plans, apply for permits, schedule inspections and more all online. Our libraries developed a curbside pick-up program that allowed patrons to order and pick up materials from the safety and comfort of their vehicles. Visit [www.charlottecountyfl.gov/covid-19/online-services.stml](http://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/covid-19/online-services.stml) for a complete list of online services.

We partnered with the Department of Health and medical providers throughout the pandemic, providing facilities and staff for testing, vaccination and treatment sites and community outreach and educational messaging. Our COVID-19 information webpage ([www.charlottecountyfl.gov/covid-19](http://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/covid-19)) was visited more than 20,000 times since the start of the pandemic. Charlotte County ranked in the Top 10 counties in the state in vaccination rate and in the Top 3 among counties with a population under 200,000.

The county partnered with local non-profits to create the Community Organizations Active in a Disaster Program to deliver aid to family impacted by the pandemic. The effort delivered nearly \$6 million in financial aid to residents, assisting more than 10,000 adults and children. The COAD program earned a NACo Achievement Award in 2021.

No county department was on the front lines of COVID-19 response more than our Fire & EMS Department. EMS calls increased 15% from 2020 to 2021, exceeding 30,000 calls annually for the first time. The monthly number of calls has exceeded the year-earlier total for the past 18 months.

Check out our social media channels ([www.charlottecountyfl.gov/social](http://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/social)) in April to see examples of county staff providing essential services, delivering on promises and operating facilities that enhance the quality of life for our residents and protect our vital natural resources for generations to come.

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