

## Summer rains and Ian repairs continue

By John Elias

As we continue to rebuild from the devastating impacts of Hurricane Ian, Public Works also prepares to enter its “busy season.” This is not to say we are not busy throughout the year, but our team will see an exponential increase in calls for service as a result of summer rains. With the increase in rainfall, roads that are due to be resurfaced will begin to develop potholes, roadway shoulders will require stabilization, roadside grass and brush will grow at an accelerated rate, and mosquito activity will ramp up.

Many of our residents from other areas of the country are not accustomed to the rains we receive in our piece of paradise here in southwest Florida. To this point, Public Works installed several weather stations throughout the county and even I was surprised by the data we received from the units. It is not uncommon to receive three to five inches of rain in an isolated area in less than an hour. We have even recorded numbers exceeding two inches of rain in less than twenty minutes. No drainage system in the world is designed to handle that much water. Therefore, we have continuous outreach programs that detail what actually constitutes a drainage problem.

When our team meets with citizens, they are often surprised to learn that what they thought was poor drainage was actually a properly working drainage system. It is not only common for water to be in swales - it is expected. Further, our proximity to sea level and minimal elevation changes often results in some areas having wet swales throughout the summer months. Another surprising fact is that in an extreme weather event, which can occur on any summer day, the roads serve as a secondary system to move water. This is why our construction standards require the house slab elevation to be above the crown of the road elevations. We continue to put out numerous social media and news outreach segments detailing what constitutes a drainage problem. Our team also stands ready to respond to any situation in which water is threatening to enter your home.

On the hurricane recovery front, we are seeing better than expected results. We know many residents are still facing repairs to their homes - myself and others on our team included. The vast majority of the debris has been removed and we urge residents that are putting yard waste out to put it in front of their residence for regularly scheduled Waste Management pickup. Throughout the county, we are seeing residents place debris in front of a vacant lot adjacent to their residence and this is considered illegal dumping. There is not a mechanism for Waste Management to remove these piles since these vacant properties are not being assessed for solid waste removal. Citizens should follow the residential curbside service guidelines which can be found online: [www.charlottecountyfl.gov/solidwaste](http://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/solidwaste)

Public Works continues to repair damage that resulted from the hurricane. The process can seem slow but to ensure maximum reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, meticulous records and processes must be followed. Citizens can find the status of these repairs online: [www.charlottecountyfl.gov/ianroadrepairs](http://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/ianroadrepairs)

We are also closely monitoring the mosquito situation. Our team works closely with the Department of Health to respond quickly to any issues that arise. You can find useful information about Malaria online: [www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/malaria](http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/malaria)

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