



ANNUAL REPORT

October 2016-September 2017



BCC Focus Area Goals

Quality of Life

Goal: Enhance community life by clean air and water, conservation of wildlife and natural resources, and provide community amenities.

Long-range Outcomes:

- Increase access to and awareness of local natural resources
- Develop a community brand or brands
- · Delineate the core community identity and implement strategies to foster it
- Improve the appearance of the community
- Support efforts to improve education
- Prioritize "blue water"

Infrastructure

Goal: Stabilize and maintain County-wide infrastructure.

Long Range Outcomes:

- Implement current projects
- Maintain maintenance programs & delineate costs
- Plan for unfunded projects Justice Center, roads
 - Analyze value of various funding mechanisms Impact Fees; MSBUs
 - Determine the amount of infrastructure needed vs. funding sources (vacant land)
 - Compare the costs of replacing old infrastructure vs. infrastructure needed for growth

Economic Development

Goal: Create a business climate that promotes a diversified, growing economy consistent with established growth management plans and enhanced quality of life.

Long Range Outcomes:

- Articulate community identity from an economic strategy perspective
- Strengthen education options for a skilled workforce needed for that identity
- Create infrastructure needed to foster development of that identity
- Improve data and analytic capacity
- Improve position in film industry

Water Resources

Goal: Ensure quality of natural water resources and provide safe and reliable water supply.

Long Range Outcomes:

- Develop a Central Sewer System
- Improve water quality in the Harbor make it possible to swim at Port Charlotte Beach
- Strengthen public appreciation of the local natural environment and its importance to our local economy
- Ensure long term water supply with regional partners
- Enhance the credibly of CCU

BCC Focus Area Goals

Growth Management

Goal: Manage growth and change consistent with the County's comprehensive plan to maximize quality of life with emphasis on efficient processes that support positive business, neighborhood communities, and protect our environmental assets.

Long Range Outcomes:

- Improved community appearance
- Improved traffic flow management
- More efficient review processes
- More consistent application and interpretation of rules
- · Modified land layout that would make the community more attractive to residents and businesses

Public Safety

Goal: Maintain a safe and healthy community in which to live.

Long Range Outcomes:

- · Maintain low crime rate
- Improve community safety features such as lighting, sidewalks, bike paths
- Improve the capacity to meet growth demands with respect to response times, equipment and space
- Execute strategies to manage risks such as code violations, driver safety and homelessness
- Maintain good working relationships with other safety providers such as hospitals
- Strengthen community education efforts
- · Healthier workforce

Human Services

Goal: Pursue available funding sources to facilitate providing services to meet community needs.

Long Range Outcomes:

- Develop a comprehensive strategic plan with community partners; integrating various plans, needs assessments; duplication of services and providing access.
- Enhance coordination with outside agencies
- Expand funding options grants
- Strengthen community education about services
- Identify who uses our services and trend data about possible future use Retirees, workers
- Better coordination with Sarasota and other surrounding counties regarding homelessness and transportation

Efficient and Effective Government

Goal: Continue to increase the effectiveness of local government and maintain a strong financial condition.

Long Range Outcomes:

- Improve performance and fiscal data
- Educate staff on tools to improve fiscal management
- Develop state level strategy for funding

Budget and Administrative Services

Real Estate

Acquisition of Warehouse Space

The successful acquisition of a large warehouse property in the Murdock area allows for the expansion of the Justice Center. The building located at 1544 Murdock Circle (Building 8) was acquired in June of 2017 at a cost of \$700,000. The building contains 10,800 square feet of storage space and will be used to relocate files currently stored in the Justice Center. Once the relocation takes place, the \$16 million Justice Center Expansion project will move forward.



Transit

Customer Service Enhancements

Transit continues to successfully move forward with additional customer service initiatives. The most significant improvement was the telephone system software rewrite which has allowed for streamlining customer calls and providing management with reliable up-to-the-minute performance measures. The rewritten software reduced overall customer on-hold times by prioritizing incoming calls and offering a new customer callback option. Since the rebranding of Transit program, the ridership continues to increase 20% year over year while maintaining an exceptionally high level of quality of on-time paratransit service (90%).

Purchasing

National Purchasing Institute – Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award
Purchasing earned the 2016 Annual Achievement of Excellence in Procurement
Award. The Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award is designed to recognize
organizational excellence in procurement. The program measures innovation,
professionalism or procurement, productivity, and leadership attributes of the

professionalism, e-procurement, productivity, and leadership attributes of the procurement function.

Charlotte County is one of only 23 government agencies in Florida and one of only 48 counties in the United States to receive the award. Purchasing has received this award twelve times and the last seven consecutive years.



Community Development



Project with Western Michigan University

Community Development is kicking off a project with WMU to map and project various demographic and socio-economic indicators. The aim of this project is to provide standard projections and needs analysis for County departments to use when developing plans for the future. This will bring in data from the County, census data, the Health Department and the CCSO.

Babcock Ranch

Babcock Ranch is a mixed-use development in east county. Although the initial development was conceived and entitled several years ago, in 2015 the developer commenced development of this exciting project. 2017 has seen many accomplishments including the completion and opening of the Founders Square commercial area and school.

Charlotte County's involvement has been recognized on multiple occasions by the developer as being efficient, professional and very easy to work with. Staff was honored to be recognized during the ribbon cutting for the development.



Technology

Some of the initiatives introduced this year include:

- Auto-issuing of trade permit types, reducing wait times for customers and eliminating unnecessary steps.
- Launch of the Contractor Central app which allows contractors to manage their permits from their mobile devices again resulting in efficiencies and reducing wait times.
- Expansion of online permitting to include all building permit types (anticipated completion September 30) including development of a "Skip the Trip" initiative.
- Electronic document review for many permit types improving transparency, reducing wait times and facilitating collaboration between the applicant and the plans reviewers.



Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations

Staff continues to work through various aspects of the comp plan and code to make them more flexible and user friendly. Changes of note this year include updates to the Transfer of Density Units program,

expansion of Incentive Density to incentivize diversification of housing types, updates to the Murdock Village plan to facilitate a new vison for the area and encourage development, updates to the Charlotte Harbor CRA code to spur development and staff is currently working on wetlands provisions, Parkside, food truck regulations and the sign code.



Community Services

Recreation

Spring Training

The Charlotte Sports Park hosted another successful year of Spring Training in Charlotte County. There was a total of 81,752 fans in attendance for the 18-game schedule and an estimated economic impact of \$16,327,500. In accordance with Major League Baseball security mandates, this year all fans, staff members and vehicles were required to enter the facility through enhanced security protocols inclusive of magnetometers, hand wands, undercarriage mirrors, and additional CCSO presence dependent upon the entrance point locations. In addition, a new video scoreboard was installed and featured in the stadium which enhanced the fan experience.

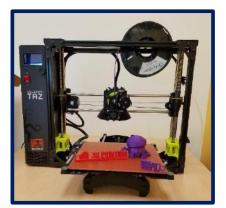


Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA)

In an effort to achieve national accreditation through the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Community Services submitted a comprehensive Self-Assessment and hosted a Review Team to evaluate all operations within the Recreation Division and Parks & Natural Resources Division. The requirements for CAPRA include documented evidence of compliance for 151 standards and involve internal partnerships with all County Departments. With over 4,000 Parks and Recreation agencies in the United States eligible to become accredited, there are currently only 153 agencies who have achieved this accreditation. The final determination of this accreditation will occur by the NRPA Commission in September.



Libraries and History



<u>Makerspaces</u>

This year marked the start of the makerspace initiative with the installation of three 3D printers. Makerspaces provide resources that allow the public to design, create, and collaborate in ways that would not be possible otherwise. Our library makerspaces are envisioned as collaborative work spaces that provide access to innovative technology, manufacturing equipment, and educational opportunities to all members of the community. Makerspace public volunteer training is taking place in August and the newly fledged makerspaces will be operational and open to the public in September.

Parks and Natural Resources

Manatee Protection Plan

In May, the Charlotte County Manatee Protection Plan was approved by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). This plan was a joint partnership between the County, FWC and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWS) that resulted in a planning document that allows for an option to streamline the regulatory process and expansion of allowable slip densities in most areas of the County while balancing the conservation needs of FWC and FWS for manatees.





Playground Replacement

Six playgrounds were replaced throughout the County. The replacement program is an ongoing maintenance program that was deferred during the economic downturn. Playgrounds were replaced at Englewood Beach, Tringali Park, Cedar Point Park, Edgewater Park, Deep Creek Park, and South County Regional Park.

UF/IFAS Extension

<u>Kid's Hands Gets Dirty in the Garden Thanks to UF/IFAS Family</u> Nutrition Program

In addition to helping people learn how to select and prepare nutritious food, the UF/IFAS Family Nutrition Program also helps youth understand where their food comes from. On November 11, FNP Program Assistant Luis Garcia Gonzalez provided education concerning small-scale backyard gardening to youth involved with the Garden Club Program. Thanks to the South County Park Community Garden Program, a raised



bed was provided for these youth to prepare the soil and plant a variety of vegetables and herbs with the long-term goal of harvesting, preparing and eating the harvest. Programs such as these help youth understand where their food comes from and fosters an appreciation for healthy food choices. Knowledge of food production and healthy-eating, even on a small scale, will help them as adult decision-makers in their future communities.

Facilities Construction and Maintenance

Veterans Memorial Park

Veterans Memorial Park is located on three acres in Rotonda West. This 2014 Sales Tax Extension project was completed in March with an estimated cost of \$692,000.

The park serves as a meeting point to honor all military veterans from all eras. This is in recognition of individuals currently serving or honorably discharged from service in any branch of armed forces since the founding of the United States.

The new park features an entrance arch, dedication memorial, walk of flags with all branches of the service, walking paths, benches, and depicted war memorials from all eras. It also includes an amphitheater with a covered stage and open seating area for ceremonies, a full gazebo and a half gazebo, and war memorials for fallen Charlotte County service members.



The new park offers opportunities for individual reflection and small gatherings, as well as a meeting place for all veterans to connect and to honor the fallen with special veteran ceremonies.

Facilities Accessibility Improvement Projects

Since 1994, all new facilities have been required to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility standards. Since that time the County has earnestly pursued a path to retrofit all facilities built prior to 1994 to ADA standards; hundreds of improvements have been completed through in-house technicians, and contracted design and construction services.

The County's current 2013 revision of its ADA transition plan contains an estimated 191 identified deficiencies requiring correction at roughly 73 facility locations. Taking the lead on park, building, site and facility ADA improvements, Facilities has completed or has under construction 96% of the 191 identified deficiencies, as well as many, many more encountered during the course of daily business. Starting in 2013, to reflect annual budgets, projects were grouped together for efficient design and contracting. The latest Group IV is currently in design and planned for construction starting in late 2018.

Typical projects consist of accessible routes of travel such as parking spaces, sidewalk connections, ramps, railings, doorway widths and thresholds. Other small corrections may include adding dual height drinking fountains, installing proper signage, replacing proper plumbing fixtures, and lowering countertops. The County's goal is to make all parks, facilities, programs and services utilized by the public accessible to the maximum extent possible.



Charlotte County Sheriff's Office District 1 Substation

The 11,579 square-foot Sheriff's District 1 Substation was completed in May. The facility is centrally located within the zone for both emergency response and for citizen access, allowing walk-in background checks, fingerprinting, and compliant processing.

This 2014 Sales Tax Extension project houses the district commander, patrol units, and investigators with areas for roll call, fitness room and locker area. The site provides short-term property and evidence storage.

It is designed to have an open, airy, façade that directs the public to the front door as soon as they are on site. The lobby is a large, secure space with lots of natural light and a private restroom for guests. A large meeting room is located off the lobby to be used as a classroom and training room for the public while maintaining security for the users.



Western Michigan University Flight Training Facility

In partnership with Charlotte County, Punta Gorda Airport and Florida Southwestern State College, Western Michigan University expanded its bachelor's Aviation Flight Science program to the Punta Gorda Airport.

Charlotte County installed program facilities including a new 3,500 square-foot training classroom located at the flight line of the airport, which will become part of the largest aviation program in the nation. In addition to fast-tracking installation of the training classroom and administrative offices, the County remodeled and upgraded a fully-functioning maintenance hangar.

The encouragement of private business expansion and economic development is important to the County and the establishment of the University Flight Training Program will create new jobs, diversify the local workforce, and positively impact Punta Gorda Airport and related businesses.



Human Resources

Kronos Timekeeping Software

Staff worked with IT, payroll and each department to roll out an automated timekeeping software that eliminates our manual process for payroll. Kronos has increased efficiency with a strong return on investment after full implementation. It has already saved hours of staff time which can be transferred to other projects/tasks.

Internship Program

The County is increasing their presence at local college job fairs by actively seeking county interns. In working with various departments, we were able to successfully place five paid interns and five unpaid interns. We also received an additional ten high school interns from the Charlotte Technical Center interested in job shadowing over the summer.

Halogen Stay Interviews and Succession Planning

This project will proactively address employee retention through gauging employment satisfaction levels and retention risk through key questions initiated during periodic stay interviews. Through the use of talent assessments and succession planning questions, Human Resources will be able to identify readiness for promotion, as well as create talent pools with associated competencies for supervisory levels in the County. This will allow development of enhanced talent management strategies and individualized development plans. By retaining our current, trained staff we realize significant savings in turnover and training costs. As employee morale increases, productivity also increases.

Human Services

Housing Services

State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Funds

During this current state Fiscal Year, Charlotte County/City of Punta Gorda was awarded \$941,357 in State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) funds through the Florida Housing Finance Corporation. These funds provide housing assistance to eligible very low, low and moderate income households and to special needs individuals in obtaining or repairing their homes.

Twenty-four households were assisted with Housing Rehabilitation (seven new roofs, 14 new air conditioning systems plus numerous other repairs) and one household was assisted with Purchase Assistance. Nine of the households served had a household member with a developmental or other disability. The City of Punta Gorda received \$85,000 in SHIP funding for the rehabilitation of four vacant ground floor units in an existing mixed-use building from commercial use to affordable rental housing.



Family Services

Support Services

The Family Services Division serviced 1,667 customers this year with funding from our Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program as well as 340 customers from the Community Service Block Grant funding. We have seen great accomplishments from our Family Self Sufficiency Program participants as several have obtained full time jobs throughout the community, which has given them the ability to obtain safe affordable housing for their families.

Public Safety

Animal Control

Pet-Friendly Shelters

Animal Control and Emergency Management are working together in developing protocol for pet-friendly emergency evacuation shelters in the county. This began in October 2016 as Charlotte County activated an emergency shelter at the Harold Avenue Recreation Center in Port Charlotte for those seeking refuge from Hurricane Matthew's landfall on Florida's east coast. It was determined at that time that pets would be allowed at this shelter. Animal Control stationed an officer overnight at this facility to make sure the animals were cared for and safe.

The success of this endeavor prompted Emergency Management to declare all emergency shelters in the county as pet-friendly. Animal Control and Emergency Management are now working together to ensure proper supplies are stockpiled in the event of an emergency activation as well as hurricane shelter training of county staff. This provides county pet owners with the opportunity to keep their pets with them at a shelter and not have to seek alternative plans for their pets.

Emergency Management

Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP)

Emergency Management was accredited by the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP). EMAP is an independent non-profit organization that fosters excellence and accountability in emergency management and homeland security programs by establishing credible standards applied in a peer review accreditation process. Charlotte County joins the State of Florida and sixteen other Florida counties in receiving the accreditation.

Radio Communications

Digital P25 Radio System

On March 1st, Radio Communications entered in a contract with Communications International to Procure, Install and Maintain the counties new Harris P25 Digital Radio System for the next 15 years. The digital radio

system infrastructure has already been delivered to all towers and dispatch centers and the installation and new system migration process is now in the planning stage.

The new radio system came in several million dollars under budget by bringing a "vendor neutral" RFP to the table, thereby providing the public with the highest quality digital radio communications system at the lowest cost. Procurement of an advanced digital communication system will



provide enhanced and more efficient communications capabilities to our first responders as compared to the old analog system currently in place. This will ultimately improve the public's safety and well-being.

Babcock Tower

An additional tower site was approved to be added to the new digital radio communications system while staying within the budgeted \$10,000,000. The addition of this new site will fill in a large coverage hole in the southeast county area and in anticipation of the Babcock Ranch, which currently under construction.

Landfill Tower

Peak Power Services was awarded the 250' landfill tower project on June 27. The contractor has already begun preparations for this project and is filing for a county permit to begin construction. This tower will extend the radio coverage in south county. To provide cost savings to the county, several phases of this project are being performed in-house.

Fire/EMS Training

Paramedic Training

The department's first recruit class of newly hired paramedics are now attending fire school at the Englewood Fire Academy. This class will bring much needed paramedics to our team of pre-hospital care givers.

SAVE Training

This training involves a coordinated response between Fire/EMS and Law Enforcement for active shooter scenarios. The Federal Emergency Management Association and

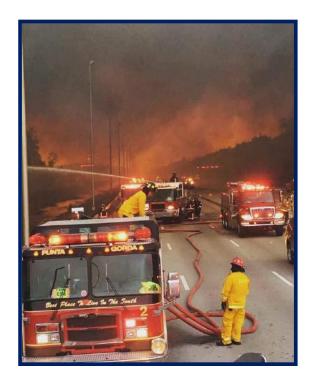


National Fire Academy placed the responsibility on local jurisdictions to develop and have a plan for these types of responses. We responded by researching nationally and regionally for what best practices or standards for these responses had been established. Our research resulted in finding a Swift Assisted Victim Extraction "SAVE" training course. After attending the training, we worked together with the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office on how to implement it. This training required multiple attendances by Fire/EMS personnel to attend CCSO's block training. The training is now being conducted within Fire/EMS and equipment is being distributed.

Fire Operations

Staff successfully responded to the busiest brush season in more than a decade. The department saved numerous homes and other types of property.





Public Works

Gasparilla Road Widening

The project consisted of widening at portion of Gasparilla Road (CR 771) from West Rotonda Blvd, north to SR 776, a length of +/- 2.5 miles. The new roadway has 2 - 12' lanes in each direction plus a 4' paved shoulder along the outside, a 22' curbed median, lighting, a 10' sidewalk along the east side of the roadway and an additional left turn lane from west bound SR 776 to south Gasparilla Road. The construction was completed under the GMP cost of \$25,054,793.67.

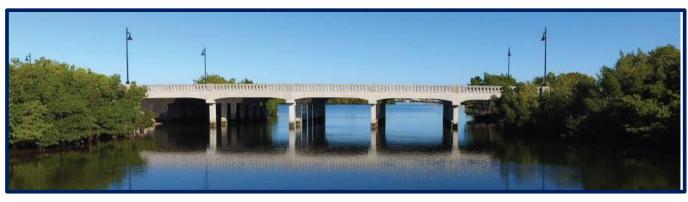
Edgewater Drive Phase 2 Improvements

Congestion along Edgewater Drive advanced the need for widening the roadway and provided an opportunity to transform the existing two-lane minor arterial into a four-lane residential boulevard.



In keeping with the "residential feel" of the area, the project included decorative roadway lighting, irrigated landscaped medians, decorative barrier wall, which resulted in no guard rails, continuous multi-use pathways and four roundabouts that move traffic safely and efficiently thorough intersections. The project also replaced three bridges that were at the end of their useful life. Constructed in 1968, none of the bridges had sidewalks, and their barrier walls did not meet current standards.





Placida Road Safety Improvements

This project includes a northbound left turn at Panama Drive, southbound left turn at Bantry Bay, southbound deceleration lane at Cape Haze Drive, milling and resurfacing and construction of a 10' wide bicycle-pedestrian bath between Rotonda Boulevard West and the Boca Grande Causeway. The construction of this project started in February and is scheduled to be complete by the Summer of 2018.

Utilities added a reclaimed water line and force main sewer to this project. Conducting county utility work in conjunction with construction of the multi-use path and safety improvements minimizes disruption to residents

and business within the project limits.





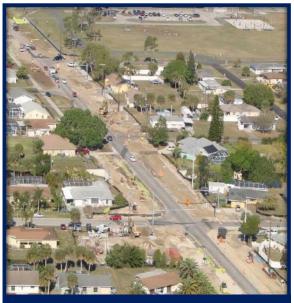
Paving Program

Edmund Street is one of the streets in the Charlotte Park area of the Punta Gorda Non-Urban District. All the streets in this area were in varying degrees of disrepair with numerous complaints from the citizens. These streets had not been paved in approximately 30 years. As you can see in the "before" picture they, were definitely in need of repair. All the streets in the Charlotte Park area were repaired and paved in the FY16 Paving Program.

Since the paving has taken place Public Works has not received any complaints, the cost of maintenance of potholes no longer exists, and we have created a safer roadway for the motoring public to travel.







Midway Boulevard During Construction

Midway Boulevard Widening Phase 2

This project consists of widening a portion of Midway Boulevard to four lanes from west of Sharpe Street east to Kings Highway, for a total length of +/- 2.25 miles. The project includes sidewalks, major drainage improvements, county utility relocations and improvements, installation of a new mast arm traffic signal at Midway and Beacon Boulevard. The construction of this project started in June 2015 and is scheduled to be complete by the Fall of 2018.

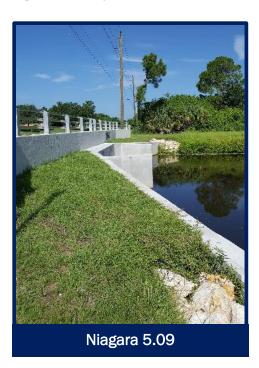
Fordham 4.60 and Niagara 5.09 Water Control Structures

In the 1998 Stormwater Master Plan, it was determined that many of the existing water control structures in Greater Port Charlotte were either undersized or had deteriorated since they were originally built in the 1960s.

This project provided for the construction of two stormwater control structures under Quasar Boulevard at the Niagara and the Fordham Waterways. The new structure at the Fordham

4.60 replaced two deteriorated 60-inch metal stand pipes with one eight-foot by ten-foot concrete box culvert and a weir. The new structure at the Niagara 5.09 replaced two deteriorated 48-inch metal stand pipes with 2 48-inch concrete pipes and a weir.

The new stormwater control structures provide better flood control to help protect property during a rain event. A wider clear zone is also provided to the traveling public on the roadway. The project was completed on time and under budget in January 2017.





Tourism

Adventure Guide

Tourism's new Adventure Guide is a complete departure from previous guides, and features a first -person narrative from the perspective of a visitor experiencing the destination for the first time. The guide has been extremely well received by visitors and locals alike. The focus on our destination's natural product is greatly enhanced.

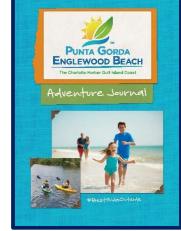
New Brand Launch

Tourism launched a new brand for the destination.

The brand message is:

Punta Gorda / Englewood Beach - The Charlotte Harbor Gulf Island Coast - is a relaxing, more secluded Florida destination that offers all the best of Florida's

wonderful outdoor experiences and lifestyle. From beaches to boating, hiking to harbor tours, fishing to nature discovery; to sun, shelling and fossilized shark's teeth, Punta Gorda & Englewood Beach offer visitors more of what they come to Florida for: relaxation and discovery in an outdoor vacationland. Our Best Side is Outside.^{5M}



Generating Positive Media Coverage for Charlotte County



Tourism works with various media outlets to generate destination coverage in print, television, radio and online. As an example, our staff works with Scott Fais, the host of "Florida on a Tankful." Scott has visited our destination several times and the TV program he does reaches more than 2 million households in our strongest in-state feeder markets – particularly for summer business.

Destination Video

A 22-minute destination overview video was created for use in hotels, resorts and managed properties. The video is not only promotional; it is educational and speaks to the unique natural product we have in Charlotte County.

Bringing Convention and Event Business to Charlotte County

SpringFling Women's Collegiate Lacrosse event attracted 38 teams (all from out of state) and generated over \$2 million in directed expenditures while tracking nearly 1,500 hotel room nights. This event has also been secured for 2018.

EVP Dig the Sun Beach Volleyball Pro-Am utilized two Punta Gorda venues for the competition, Florida Tracks & Trails and the Four Points by Sheraton. In addition to the direct economic impact, the event was aired more than 80 times on various regional sports networks in the Midwest and Northeast U.S. over the month of June providing valuable exposure for our destination and both competition venues.

U.S. Amateur Basketball Boys State Championship attracted 50 teams from around the state and generated estimated direct expenditures of over \$500,000 and 300 room nights in early June.



Utilities

Awards and Recognitions

Utilities won the annual Best Tasting Drinking Water Contest in Region X held by the Florida Section of the American Water Works Association. The department also received outstanding safety awards from the Florida Water Environment Association and the 2016 National Association of Counties' Achievement Award.

Customer Service Upgrades

59,000 customer accounts were upgraded to a new customer service software system and converted more than 27,000 accounts to fixed-based meters during the 2016-17 fiscal year (as part of a longer-term contract project with Mueller).

Call wait time has dropped to under a minute from an average of 2-4 minutes from improvements to call payment procedures. Now all payments go through the automated system instead of customer service representatives.

More customers are happy with the decreased wait time and the number of abandoned calls is only a fraction of what it was.





Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners



Ken Doherty Vice-Chairman District 1



Christopher Constance
District 2



Bill Truex Chairman District 3



Stephen R. Deutsch District 4



Joseph Tiseo District 5

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Produced by Charlotte County Government.

The Annual Report is a report on the State of Charlotte County as required by F.S. § 125.74(b)