

2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season Begins

Now is the time to get ready for a hurricane

The 2020 Hurricane Season started June 1. Hurricanes are among nature’s most powerful and destructive phenomena. Early forecasts by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center is predicting above-normal activity for the 2020 Atlantic hurricane season. NOAA is a division of the National Weather Service.

The outlook predicts a 60 percent chance of an above-normal season, a 30 percent chance of a near-normal season and only a 10 percent chance of a below-normal season. The Atlantic hurricane season officially runs from June 1 through November 30.

NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center is forecasting a likely range of 13 to 19 named storms (winds of 39 mph or higher), of which 6 to 10 could become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or higher), including 3 to 6 major hurricanes (category 3, 4 or 5; with winds of 111 mph or higher). NOAA provides these ranges with a 70 percent confidence. An average hurricane season produces 12 named storms. The combination of several climate factors is driving the strong likelihood for above-normal activity in the Atlantic this year.



El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) conditions are expected to either remain neutral or to trend toward La Nina, meaning there will not be an

El Nino present to suppress hurricane activity. Also, there are warmer-than-average sea surface temperatures in the tropical Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea, coupled with reduced vertical wind shear, and weaker tropical Atlantic trade winds. Similar conditions have been producing more active seasons since the current high-activity era began in 1995.

Hurricanes pose the greatest threat to life and property however, tropical storms and depressions can also be devastating. The primary hazards from tropical storms, tropical depressions, and hurricanes, are storm surge flooding, inland flooding from heavy rains, destructive winds, tornadoes, and high surf and rip current.

Storm surge is the abnormal rise of water generated by a storm’s winds. This hazard is historically the leading cause of hurricane related deaths in the United States. Storm surge and large battering waves can result in large loss

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Cape Coral Remains Atop Safest Cities

Police Department credits officers, staff and community for success

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) recently released the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) statistics for 2019. The City of Cape Coral is rated the safest city in Florida for violent crime, with populations greater than 100,000 residents. The City of Cape Coral also had the highest reduction in violent and non-violent crimes than any other comparable city.

The Uniform Crime Reporting Program’s function is to generate a reliable set of criminal statistics for use in law enforcement operation, administration, and management. The program is used around the nation and has become of the country’s leading indicators as to the growth or decline in crime.

The City of Cape Coral experienced a more than 19 percent decrease in violent crime and a more than 21 percent decrease in non-violent crime.

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City of Cape Coral Council Members

DISTRICT 1



John Gunter
(239) 574-0437
jgunter@capecoral.net

DISTRICT 2



John Carioscia
(239) 574-0437
jcarioscia@capecoral.net

DISTRICT 3



Marilyn Stout
(239) 574-0437
mstout@capecoral.net

DISTRICT 4



Jennifer Nelson
(239) 574-0437
jnelson@capecoral.net

DISTRICT 5



Lois Welsh
(239) 574-0437
lwelsh@capecoral.net

DISTRICT 6



Rick Williams
(239) 574-0437
rwilliam@capecoral.net

DISTRICT 7



Jessica Cosden
(239) 574-0437
jcosden@capecoral.net

City of Cape Coral Administration

City Manager

John Szerlag

City Clerk

Kimberly Bruns, Director

Financial Services

Victoria Bateman, Director

Information Technology Services

Michelle Hoffmann, Director

Public Works

Paul Clinghan, Director

City Attorney

Dolores Menendez

Community Development

Vince Caetero, Director

Fire Department

Ryan Lamb, Chief

Parks and Recreation

Kerry Runyon, Director

Utilities Department

Jeff Pearson, Director

City Auditor

Andrea Russell

Economic Development

Ricardo Noguera, Manager

Human Resources

Lisa Sonogo, Director

Police Department

Dave Newlan, Chief

Editor/Public Information

Maureen Buice,
Sr. Public Info. Specialist

On The Move is a quarterly newsletter produced by the City of Cape Coral for the citizens of the city.

The publication is mailed as a courtesy to every household and business in the city. Comments or questions can be directed to the City Manager's Office, P.O. Box 150027, Cape Coral, FL 33915-0027 or by email to newsletter@capecoral.net.

Mayor's Message

Welcome to the summer issue *On The Move*. The 2020 Atlantic hurricane season officially began June 1 and experts are predicting an above-normal season. The best way to protect your family and your home is to be prepared. Please don't wait until a storm is headed this way. This newsletter includes important emergency preparedness information to help keep you and your families safe this summer.

Speaking of safety, the country is facing unprecedented times and I am encouraged that that city as a whole has pulled together to support its residents and businesses during this COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic was unexpected and has created hardships for many people, businesses, and organizations. Above all, we are committed to making decisions with the safety of our community at the forefront.

I am proud that the Police Department's partnership with the community keeps Cape Coral among the safest cities in Florida. There is more information in this newsletter about crime statistics in the city and the Police Department's response to current events. I am also pleased that restoration

work has begun on the Coral Pointe Canal bank and we have found a compromise for the future Tropicana Park that I think will work for everyone.

I recently negotiated a contract with our next City Manager, Rob Hernandez. Rob will take over the city's top administrative position in mid-August and I am confident his leadership will keep Cape Coral moving in the right direction. Rob joins us from the City of Fort Lauderdale after serving as the City Manager in Savannah, Georgia.

Your City Council also will begin work on the upcoming Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget in August. Based on preliminary figures, we expect to see property values increase this year, which will provide some additional tax revenue. We are still evaluating the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and will have a clearer picture of revenues and expenses when we reconvene in July, after a brief summer break. In the meantime, we are heavily scrutinizing any planned capital projects and other significant expenses.

During the short break, I will be working closely with the Cape Coral Rotary Foundation to host Prom 2020. Six separate proms will be held for Cape Coral and North Fort Myers seniors who had

their proms canceled due to the pandemic. I would like to thank the local sponsors that have stepped up to support these celebrations, which will take place at the Westin Cape Coral Resort at Marina Village.

We have an upcoming Primary election in August and the General election is in November. It's important that you vote and that you become educated on the issues facing our community. Council districts 2, 3, 5, and 7 will be on the ballot and are elected citywide. There also are several county and constitutional office seats that will appear on the ballot including three County Commission seats, four Lee County School District seats as well as the office of Sheriff and the Lee County Property Appraiser. Local elections are critical and have a direct impact on the lives of our Cape Coral citizens.

On behalf of our great City, I wish you a safe and happy summer. ■

Regards,




City Manager's Message

Welcome to the summer issue *On The Move*, our community newsletter. This will be my last message in the newsletter as I am retiring in August after serving the Cape Coral community since 2012.

This issue features our annual focus on hurricane preparation. There are several articles and information to help our residents prepare for the storm season. As you read through the publication, you will find valuable information on how you and your family can be ready for any storm that impacts our area. Early forecasts by the National Weather Service predict an above-normal hurricane season with 13 to 19 named storms this year.

Our summer issue is an information tool for our citizens providing details about flooding risk, storm surge, and hurricane preparation plans and supplies. The City earns valuable information points toward our Community Rating System (CRS) score by distributing this important information to all residents and businesses in the Cape Coral. Our CRS score provides discounts on flood insurance premiums for our residents. Please take the time to prepare for the hurricane season before a storm is headed this way.

I am working with City staff on my proposed Fiscal Year 2021 – 2023 budget for the City of Cape Coral. Although Mayor and Council only will be adopting a

budget for FY 2021, the three-year rolling budget format allows City Council and the community to consider future financial impacts of policy-related decisions and to chart the future course for the level of service we want to provide. Essentially, a multi-year budget is a foundation for economic sustainability. Due to the economic impact resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are closely monitoring the City's revenues. The state shared sales tax as well as the local half-cent sales tax are areas of concern. We are prioritizing capital projects and taking another look at the need to fulfill any vacant positions.

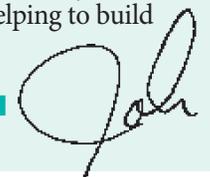
We received our preliminary taxable property value estimates from the Lee County Property Appraiser, and Cape Coral's values increased 5.75 percent, which is higher than the 4 percent the City projected. The additional property tax revenue will be included in my proposed operating budget that will be released in mid-July. Growth in property values is always good to see as it enhances investment value. However, during this pandemic, we have to be most concerned about individual economic situations. As such, we need to structure a budget that strikes a balance between the overall cost of government and maintaining a good level of service to resident and business taxpayers. We have some challenges this year due to the pandemic that will impact the budget and my proposed budget will continue to maintain the economic sustainability of Cape Coral.

Speaking of economic sustainability, this has been a long journey, which started shortly after I arrived in 2012. Our finances and capital assets were in perilous condition. Cape Coral did not have a capital program and streets were failing, fire trucks broke down en route to calls, and many police cars spent more time in the shop than on the road. The City long-relied on a single revenue source, property taxes, to fund most of the city's general operations. When the real estate market tanked, so did the City's property tax revenues. A choice was made to adopt new revenue streams and reduce the property tax rate. Adopting new revenues was not an easy decision but these policies led to our economic sustainability and the betterment of our community. Cape Coral remains one of the most affordable and safest cities compared to similar Florida cities.

We have accomplished a great deal working together – City Council, City staff, and the community. I want to thank you for your support and for helping to build a better Cape Coral.

Have a good summer and I hope that you and your families stay safe. ■

Best regards,




Hurricane Season

of life and cause massive destruction along the coast. Storm surge can travel several miles inland, especially along bays, rivers, and estuaries.

Flooding from heavy rains is the second leading cause of fatalities from landfalling tropical cyclones. Widespread torrential rains associated with these storms often cause flooding hundreds of miles inland. This flooding can persist for several days after a storm has dissipated.

Winds from a hurricane can destroy buildings and manufactured homes. Signs, roofing material, and other items left outside can pose safety risks during hurricanes.

Tornadoes can accompany landfalling tropical cyclones. These tornadoes typically occur in rain bands well away from the center of the storm.

Dangerous waves produced by a tropical cyclone's strong winds can pose a significant hazard to coastal residents and mariners. These waves can cause deadly rip currents, significant beach erosion, and damage to structures along the coastline, even when the storm is more than 1,000 miles offshore.

Without knowing when or where storms may occur, the City of Cape Coral takes every precaution and applies the lessons learned from Hurricane Irma and other previous storms. City departments work year-round to prepare the community for all hazards. Cape Coral Fire Department's Emergency Management Division coordinates many of these activities including the development of emergency plans, conducting trainings and exercises, and utilizing innovative technologies such as weather monitoring devices.

One of the greatest assets that Emergency Management has at its disposal is a dedicated group of Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers. These volunteers have completed various trainings and certifications to assist the community during preparedness, response and recovery efforts.

What to Do Before a Tropical Storm or Hurricane:

The best time to prepare for a hurricane is before hurricane season begins. If you aren't prepared, now is the time. It is vital to understand your home's vulnerability to storm surge, flooding, and wind. Here is your checklist of things to do before a hurricane develops.

■ **Know Your Zone:** Hurricane Evacuation Zones are no longer referenced by storm category, but are now named by Hurricane Surge Evacuation Zones A/B/C/D/E.

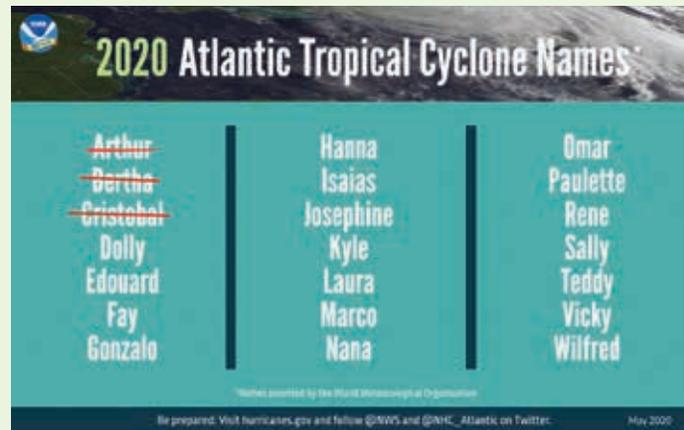
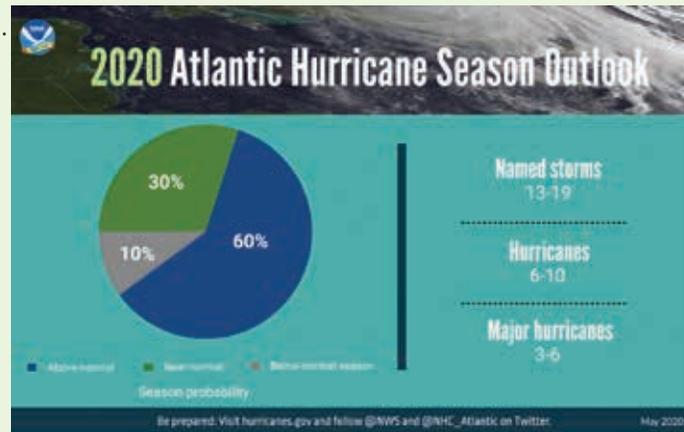
Visit www.LeeEOC.com to find out what zone you are in.

1. Click on "Know My Evacuation Zone" in the navigation bar;
2. Click the Find My Evacuation Zone link;
3. Enter your address in the search bar.

■ **Put Together an Emergency Kit:** Put together a basic emergency kit. Check emergency equipment, such as flashlights, generators, storm shutters, and a two-week supply of prescription medications.

■ **Write or Review Your Family Emergency Plan:** Before an emergency happens, sit down with your family or close friends and decide how you will get in contact with each other, where you will go, and what you will do in an emergency. Keep a copy of this plan in your emergency supplies kit or another safe place where you can access it in the event of a disaster. Make your written Emergency Plan.

■ **Review Your Insurance Policies:** Review your insurance policies to ensure



emergencies could occur and how you should respond. Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or other radio or TV stations for the latest storm news.

■ **Follow instructions** issued by local officials. Leave immediately if ordered.

■ **If NOT ordered to evacuate:**

- **Take refuge in a small interior room**, closet, or hallway on the lowest level during the storm. Put as many walls between you and the outside as you can.
- **Stay away from windows**, skylights, and glass doors.
- **If the eye of the storm passes over your area**, there will be a short period of calm, but at the other side of the eye, the wind speed rapidly increases to hurricane force winds coming from the opposite direction.

After a Hurricane:

■ **Continue listening** to a NOAA Weather Radio or the local news for the latest updates.

■ **If you evacuated**, return home only when officials say it is safe.

■ **Once home, drive only if necessary** and avoid flooded roads and washed-out bridges. Watch for fallen objects in the road, downed electrical wires, and weakened walls, bridges, roads, and sidewalks that might collapse.

■ **Walk carefully** around the outside of your home to check for loose power lines, gas leaks, and structural damage.

■ **Stay out** of any building if you smell gas, if floodwaters remain around the building, if the building or home was damaged by fire, or if the authorities have not declared it safe.

■ **Carbon monoxide poisoning** is one of the leading causes of death after storms in areas dealing with power outages. Never use a portable generator inside your home or garage.

■ **Use battery-powered flashlights.** Do NOT use candles. Turn on your flashlight before entering a vacated building. The battery could produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present.

Remember, no matter the forecast, it only takes one event to devastate a community, so now is the time to prepare. ■

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that you have adequate coverage for your home and personal property.

■ **Understand the meaning** of National Weather Service Forecast watches and warnings.

Actions to Take When a Tropical Storm or Hurricane Threatens:

When a hurricane threatens your community, be prepared to evacuate if evacuations are ordered for your evacuation zone. Allow enough time to pack and inform friends and family if you need to leave your home.

■ **Secure your home:** Cover all of your home's windows. Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection for windows. A second option is to board up windows with 5/8-inch exterior grade or marine plywood, built to fit, and ready to install. Buy supplies before the hurricane season rather than waiting for the pre-storm rush.

■ **Stayed tuned in:** Check the websites of your local National Weather Service office, National Hurricane Center, Lee County Emergency Management office, and the Cape Coral Emergency Management Division. Find out what type of

Advanced Life Support Service NOW AVAILABLE at All Cape Coral Fire Stations

For the first time in its 58-year history, the Cape Coral Fire Department is capable of providing Advanced Life Support (ALS) at all of its fire stations.

At the beginning of June, Engine 2, located at Station 2 on Nicholas Parkway, and Rescue 4, located at Station 4 on Santa Barbara Boulevard, were upgraded from providing Basic Life Support to Advanced Life Support.

Basic Life Support is provided by EMTs (the minimum level of medical training required for Cape Coral firefighters), while ALS is provided by certified paramedics. This advanced care includes administering intravenous (IV) medications and fluids, cardiac monitoring, and advanced



A Cape Coral Fire Engine displays an Advanced Life Support vehicle permit.



Paramedics are certified to administer IV medications and fluids, conduct cardiac monitoring, and perform advanced airway techniques.

airway techniques. "The purpose of the fire department is to save lives," said Fire Chief Ryan W. Lamb. "And, now ALS service, the highest level of pre-hospital care, is available to all residents no matter where they live in the City. This was years in the making, and we, and the community who will benefit from this service, are grateful to City Council for having the foresight to provide funding for the resources needed to bring this goal to fruition." ■

City Continues to Seek Removal of Chiquita Lock

The City of Cape Coral plans to continue its efforts to remove the Chiquita Lock. In March, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection denied a permit to remove the Lock. The City has determined that the best way to proceed is to file a new application for lock removal. The new application will require a significant amount of supporting data. This work will include ecological studies and the gathering and analysis of data. It's too early in the application process to provide an estimated timeline for when a decision could be rendered by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. ■



CITY OF CAPE CORAL City Council Elections 2020

The City of Cape Coral will hold Primary and General elections this year. There are four seats on the ballot: Districts 2, 3, 5, and 7. The **Primary Election** will be **August 18, 2020**. The **General Election** will be held on **November 3, 2020**. These are non-partisan elections.

All candidates must be continuous, full-time residents of Cape Coral for the entire calendar year preceding their qualification for office. Candidates must also reside in their respective districts. The terms of office are four years. All terms begin the first regular Council meeting held after the date of the General Election. Candidates must pay the required fees and complete all necessary paperwork in the City Clerk's Office. A "Financial Disclosure Form" must be completed and the candidate's voter registration card is required. The filing fee for Council Member is \$100 plus the Election Assessment fee of 1 percent of the annual salary, which is \$34,834, for a total amount of \$448.34.

A primary election is held when more than two candidates are running for a seat. If just two candidates are running in the same district, the candidates go straight to the General Election in November. If only one candidate is running, he/she is automatically elected.

For more information about the 2020 City Council Elections, please contact the City Clerk's Office at (239) 574-0417. ■

Annual Water Quality Report Available

Cape Coral continues to provide a safe and reliable source of drinking water

Cape Coral Utilities' customers continue to receive drinking water that meets or exceeds all federal and state requirements.

Water quality is a primary concern across the nation. Cape Coral's annual water quality report summarizes information about the city's finished drinking water and the source water our community relies on. The protection of our source water depends on all of us. To keep our source water as safe as possible, please use and dispose of chemicals and other harmful materials properly.

The City of Cape Coral's "Annual Consumer Report on the Quality of Tap Water" for 2019 is available online. Consumers can view the report at capedrinking-water.net. The report, also known as the "Consumer Confidence Report", contains important information about the source and quality of the city's drinking water.

The annual report is required by the Safe Drinking Water Act. In the past, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency required public water systems to direct mail the report to all consumers. The EPA now allows public water systems to make the report available online in place of the more costly printing and mailing option.

Residents may contact the City's Utilities Department by calling (239) 242-3420 if they prefer a paper copy of this report. ■



Safest Cities

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This was the most significant improvement in comparison to comparable cities.

“To be clear, one crime committed against a citizen of Cape Coral is too many. We still have a lot of work to do, and we will continue to protect our citizens at all costs within the guidelines of the law,” said Chief Dave Newlan.

The Police Department attributes the decrease in violent and non-violent crime to diligent and meticulous work by officers and support staff, coupled with an unrivaled spirit of cooperation with the Cape Coral community. It is also a product of the strong support from City Manager Szerlag, Mayor Joe Coviello, and the City Council.



Police Chief David Newlan



As the Police Department continues to expand sworn officer staffing and strengthening partnerships with stakeholders, the Police Department anticipates remaining one of the safest, if not the safest city in Florida.

The Cape Coral Police Department has a partnership with citizens that is not often experienced by other law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. This relationship and support make Cape Coral a model for other law enforcement agencies to emulate. This partnership is true community policing, and it is paying dividends.

The Police Department wishes to express their sincere gratitude to the community for their continued support. As Cape Coral continues to safely re-open Florida, we can all enjoy living, working, and playing in the Safest City in Florida. ■

Remote Inspection Program IMPLEMENTED for Interior Habitable Spaces

The City's Building Division implemented a remote inspection program in April. Through the City's web site customers may schedule a remote inspection via video conferencing. This new program is required for all inspections that require a City Building Inspector to enter the interior habitable spaces of occupied structures.

New construction inspections and inspections of roofing, pools, aluminum structures, fences, sheds, detached garages, inspections, which only require an inspector to enter a garage (non-habitable space), and other exterior inspections continue in-person as normal.

The reason for the change is to protect the health of customers and staff by following the CDC guidelines for social distancing. The remote inspection process protects both the community and the inspectors against transmission of the COVID-19 virus and other illnesses.

In addition to added safety, another benefit is scheduling. Remote inspection appointments can be scheduled entirely online at a time that is convenient for the customer. The remote inspection program provides time savings and greater efficiency.

Customers will receive a reminder email before the scheduled inspection time. The inspection will begin at the scheduled inspection time with a video call from a Building Inspector to the customer's smart device (an internet-connected smart-phone or tablet).

For more information, please visit the City of Cape Coral Building Division Permitting page. This webpage has a link to a guide containing instructions, equipment and software requirements, and a list of inspections eligible for the remote inspection program.

To access the Permitting Page, visit www.capecoral.net, navigate to the "I Want To" menu at the top of the page, and select "Apply For Permits." ■



City FIRST RESPONDERS to be HONORED

by Cape Coral Historical Museum

The Cape Coral Historical Museum continues its celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the incorporation of the City of Cape

Coral with a temporary exhibit titled "Behind the Mask-Cape Coral Heroes", which will run through early next year. This tribute to our local first responders will showcase the history of the Cape Coral Fire Department, Cape Coral Police Department and Cape Coral Hospital along with personal items and stories of those who have served through the years. Each Department will be featured for eight weeks with a short closure in between each display period.

"Behind the Mask-Cape Coral Heroes" opens to the public at 11 a.m. on Friday, June 26. The Cape Coral Fire Department will be featured first, with the display open through Saturday, August 22. The Cape Coral Police Department will be featured next from September 4 through October 31, while the Cape Coral Hospital will be featured from November 13 through January 9, 2021.

The Cape Coral Historical Museum is located at 544 Cultural Park Boulevard in Cape Coral. Currently, the Museum is viewable by guided tour only from Wednesday through Saturday. Tours leave once an hour, on the hour during regular business hours. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, tours are limited to a maximum of 8 people so we encourage you to go to the museum's website to RSVP for a tour time.

For more details on the exhibit, museum hours and how to sign up for a tour of the Museum, please visit our website at www.capecoralhistoricalmuseum.org or call the Museum at 239-772-7037. ■



Caloosahatchee Connect

Two Cities Working Together for a Better Environment

In 2018, the City of Cape Coral and the City of Fort Myers entered into an interlocal agreement to

construct a pipeline across the Caloosahatchee River to transmit reclaimed water from Fort Myers to Cape Coral. The reclaimed water transmission main will reduce nutrient discharges to the River while providing more reclaimed water to Cape Coral. The additional water source will reduce withdrawals from freshwater canals and help maintain water levels during the dry season. Reclaimed water is treated to conform to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection standards. This water is used for irrigation purposes to water lawns and for fire protection purposes.

The City of Cape Coral will construct the reclaimed water transmission main from the Everest Water Reclamation Facility, which is located in Cape Coral, to a connection point in Fort Myers near the Midpoint Bridge. The City of Fort Myers will then connect the reclaimed water main to the South Advanced Water Treatment Facility, which is located in Fort Myers.

The Caloosahatchee Connect project will:

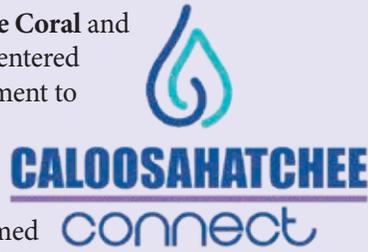
- **Allow the City of Cape Coral** to provide reclaimed water for irrigation use and fire protection purposes. The additional water source will reduce withdrawals from freshwater canals and help maintain water levels during the dry season.
- **Allow the City of Fort Myers** to dispose of treated effluent in an environmentally friendly way, while reducing the need to discharge nutrient-rich water into the Caloosahatchee River.

The engineering firm selected by the City of Cape Coral has begun the process of designing and permitting the reclaimed water transmission main that will cross under the Caloosahatchee River just south of the Midpoint Bridge. The project is expected to be constructed using a combination of traditional open-cut (trench) pipe installation and horizontal directional drill (HDD) or trenchless technology. Using trenchless technology, the new pipeline will be installed under the River with no disturbance to the river bottom, avoiding harm to the environment. When complete, this 7,600-foot reclaimed water transmission main will be the largest and longest subaqueous HDD project using fusible polyvinyl chloride pipe (FPVC) in the United States.

Project timing:

- **Construction** of the uplands portion of the pipeline on the north side of Everest Parkway from the Everest Water Reclamation Facility to Horton Park is expected to begin in spring 2021 and anticipated to be completed in fall 2021.
- **Construction** of the HDD portion of the pipeline from Horton Park across the Caloosahatchee River to a connection point in Fort Myers is anticipated to begin in fall 2021, depending on permitting. The HDD portion of the project is anticipated to be complete by December 2022.

For more information about the project or to learn more about the installation process, please visit the project website at www.CaloosahatcheeConnect.com. To receive email updates about the project, please visit the project website. For any questions or concerns about this project, please contact the Public Information Consultant for the project at (239) 337-1071 or via email at info@CaloosahatcheeConnect.com.



Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Process Underway

The proposed budget to be presented to City Council by the City Manager will be a three-year rolling budget for FY 2021 – 2023. This is consistent with the format first introduced in July 2013. The rolling budget format supports the City's Strategic Plan and allows for greater pre-planning. Potential financial issues can be identified and addressed before they reach a crisis point. As allowed by state statute, City Council will only adopt the Fiscal Year 2021 budget.



The City's budget consists of multiple funds; however, the General Fund is the primary operating fund of the City. The cost of providing law enforcement services, parks, and transportation maintenance as well as the basic

administrative services of the City are budgeted in the General Fund.

The single largest revenue source to the General Fund is ad valorem taxes. Ad valorem taxes are directly tied to taxable property values and as a result, can become an unreliable and volatile revenue source. As such, revenue diversification is the primary driver of the City's strategic goal of achieving economic sustainability. The public service tax and fire service special assessment revenues have provided the necessary funds to support the infrastructure needs of the community. This infusion of alternative revenues also has allowed the City Council to maintain, and in recent years, lower the city's millage rate.

Fiscal Year 2020 begins October 1 and meetings between staff and City Council will continue through the final adoption of the budget. Listed below are some important dates in the FY 2021 budget adoption process:

- **June 1 – Estimated Property Valuations** released to City by Property Appraiser (preliminary numbers indicate an overall increase of 5.75 percent)
- **July 1 – Preliminary Certification of Tax Roll** from Property Appraiser
- **Mid-July – Release of City Manager's Proposed Budget**
- **July-August – Setting of proposed millage rate** by Council and Council Budget Workshops
- **September – Public hearings** followed by adoption of Fiscal Year 2020 budget

Two public hearings will be held in September to adopt the City's FY 2021 Operating Budget. Those dates have not yet been determined.

CITY OPENS Employee Health & Wellness Center

Center estimated to save more than \$1M over 3 year period

After several months of feasibility studies, evaluations, and implementation efforts, the City opened the Employee Health & Wellness Center on March 16. Employees began using the Center on March 17, which was at the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic. The Center is administered by My Health Onsite and is conveniently located next to City Hall at 1020 Cultural Park Boulevard.

In 2016, the City transitioned to self-funding medical and prescription claims directly. As national health insurance costs are increasing eight percent to 12 percent each year, the City is constantly evaluating programs and solutions to mitigate the climbing costs to ensure that employee and retiree's deductibles, copays, and premiums stay at a competitive level. One of the solutions that the City considered and reviewed for years was an Employee Health & Wellness Center. The overall goal of this center is to avoid certain costly utilization visits through the City's health insurance plan, such as emergency room visits and brand name prescriptions. A visit through the Center provides a lower cost.

Through a competitive request for proposal process, the City and their employee benefits consultant, the Gehring Group, developed a return on investment analysis. This analysis identified that the City could realize a \$1 million to \$1.88 million return on investment over 3 years. The savings estimate increases over 5 years to as high as \$2.14 million, if the City captures the appropriate utilization. This return on investment study includes engaging members in preventive and wellness opportunities with the efforts to reduce high dollar claims in the long term.

The Center is open to employees, members, and retirees that are currently enrolled in the City's health insurance plan. Pediatric visits are limited.

Eligible visits include but are not limited to the following:

- Acute conditions (sore throats, headaches, coughs, sinus-related, strains/sprains, etc.)
- Ordinary and routine primary care type visits
- Lab draws ▪ X-rays ▪ Immunizations
- Preventive checkups ▪ Prescription dispensing
- Disease management (Diabetes, cholesterol, hypertension, etc.)

As the City continues to review the performance of the Center, the primary goal is saving the City money while keeping the employee benefits program competitive. ■



City's Fleet Management Division Rises Two Spots to No. 13 for Best Fleets in North America

The City of Cape Coral's Fleet Management Division was ranked No. 13 by the "100 Best Fleets in North America" program and Governing Magazine for 2019. This is the fourth consecutive year the City of

Cape Coral is among the top 100 fleets in the nation. The Fleet Management Division was ranked No. 15 in 2019, No. 42 in 2018, and No. 76 in 2017. The 100 Best Fleets program recognizes and rewards peak performing fleet operations throughout the country, identifying and encouraging ever-increasing levels of performance improvement within the fleet industry. The rankings were announced on April 7.



"I am proud of former Fleet Manager Marilyn Rawlings and the team of employees who continue to achieve awards while ensuring the City's fleet is operating efficiently," said City Manager John Szerlag. "Marilyn has taken us a very long way to enhancing our culture of professionalism."

The "100 Best Fleets in North America" program utilizes 12 different "criteria of excellence," including accountability, use of technology and information, collaboration, creativity, celebration, evidence of a high trust culture, performance recognition, doing it right the first time, quick and efficient turnaround, competitive pricing, staff development, and resources stewardship.

One of the primary purposes of 100 Best Fleets is to promote industry pride. Fewer members of the workforce are choosing automotive-related careers and it is important to spotlight the imperative function fleet management serves. As the industry continues to grow, the number of valuable resources is continually decreasing. Fleet Management, though behind the scenes, is paramount to every essential function of the City. If assets are not properly maintained and repaired, additional downtime is incurred and resources could be unavailable when needed most. High priority services such as Police, Fire, and Utilities rely on the ability to have safe, dependable vehicles and equipment at their disposal. Fleet Management continually strives to provide the City that much needed reliability.

While Rawlings recently retired, she had high expectations for the future of Cape Coral Fleet Management. Forward progress is the motto in the City's Fleet Management Division. "Continuing the positive momentum is key. Laying a good foundation while growing relationships has elevated our services to the community," said former Fleet Manager Marilyn Rawlings. "We endeavor to set lofty goals and accomplish them."

Fleet Management is a division of the Public Works Department. Fleet Management is responsible for equipment services including; vehicle and equipment maintenance and repair, governmental and environmental compliance, specification development, acquisition, disposal, and the purchase of fuel for City vehicles and equipment. The City's fleet is comprised of 1,672 vehicles and equipment. ■

City's Fleet Management Division Hires AJ Forbes as Fleet Manager

The City's Fleet Management Division recently hired **AJ Forbes** to fulfill the Fleet Manager position. Forbes will oversee the Fleet Division staff and more than 1,600 city vehicles and equipment.

Forbes was a vehicle management section chief, 5th Logistics Readiness Squadron, 5th Air Wing, Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota. He was responsible for 131 military and civilians that provided safe, serviceable, and reliable vehicles and equipment. Forbes also was responsible for managing and maintaining the base's 1,117 vehicles and equipment valued over \$117 million.

Forbes has a logistics and transportation background to include various duties as a NATO vehicle liaison, quality and assurance Inspector, vehicle management superintendent, and fleet manager. His assignments include bases in Arizona, Japan, New Mexico, Montana, South Korea, and North Dakota.

Forbes is replacing Marilyn Rawlings who recently left the position to enjoy retirement. ■



Fleet Manager
AJ Forbes

Residential Parking Regulation CHANGES

Earlier this month, changes were made to the parking regulations in residential zoning districts in the city. These changes prohibit parking on pervious surfaces, prohibit the parking of commercial vehicles in multi-family residential zoning districts, allow up to two pickup trucks with graphics to park on the driveway in all residential zoning districts; and require that car covers be maintained in good condition.

The City is focusing on informing residents about these recent changes.

■ Parking on pervious surfaces

The regulation prohibits parking on pervious surfaces on private property. Pervious surfaces include grass, shell, rocks, dirt, or stones. Vehicles may only park on approved impervious surfaces including asphalt, concrete, or pavers. The current prohibition on parking on vacant lots has not changed.

***Parking in the right-of-way is permitted by state law as long as the vehicle is parked parallel to the roadway and in the same travel of direction. The vehicle should not block a sidewalk or bike lane and must be off the roadway. The right-of-way typically extends about 15 feet from the edge of the pavement on a local street.*

■ Commercial vehicle parking in multi-family zoning districts

The changes prohibit parking commercial vehicles in multi-family zoning districts. Previously, such parking was allowed. In several instances this resulted in adverse impacts to neighbors, such as semi-tractors being parked on multi-family properties, often adjacent or across the street (in full view) from single-family homes. The city also received reports of duplex properties being used primarily for commercial vehicle parking.

■ Pickups and vans with advertisements/graphics/lettering

This change allows up to two pickup trucks or light vans with graphics/lettering to be parked on a driveway. This change treats pickups and light vans in the same manner as SUVs or passenger cars and brings consistency to the Land Development Code. This amendment does not change the existing prohibition of pickups or vans with ladder racks, utility boxes, or equipment left in the truck bed.

■ Car covers

Car covers must be properly maintained and must be manufactured for the specific purpose of being used as a car cover. This change is the result of car covers in extreme disrepair creating unsightly conditions.

These changes were the result of multiple public meetings and a recommendation for approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Violations of the regulation will be addressed by the City's Code Compliance Division. The primary goal is always voluntary compliance as 98 percent of all Code cases result in compliance.

If you have any questions about these changes, please contact the City's Code Compliance Division at (239) 574-0613. ■

Council Selects Cape Coral's Next City Manager

City Manager John Szerlag will retire August 11

The City Council recently selected **Roberto Hernandez** as Cape Coral's next city manager. He will replace City Manager John Szerlag who is retiring after serving for more than eight years in Cape Coral's top administrative position.

Hernandez is currently the deputy city manager in Fort Lauderdale, he previously served as the city manager in Savannah, Georgia from 2016-2019 and was the deputy county administrator in Broward County, Florida from 2013-2016. Hernandez is expected to start on August 12 and was selected after five finalists were interviewed by the City Council.

Hernandez will be paid between \$180,000-\$270,000 annually. The details of his contract are being finalized by the City Council. ■



John Szerlag

Coral Pointe Canal Restoration Work Begins

Restoration work along the Coral Pointe Canal is underway after the City received a warning letter from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection after protected mangroves were removed during a canal maintenance project.

The restoration work involves mobilizing equipment to the project site, the removal of invasive species (Australian Pines), bank reshaping, berm building, hydroseeding, and mangrove planting.

An agreement between the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the City allows up to 120 days for work to be completed. ■



↑ Coral Pointe Canal restoration work began May 26.

→ Environmental Resources Division staff examine the area for protected species as a loader makes its way to the bank of the Coral Pointe Canal.



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CHOOSE your PURPOSE

2020 STORM SEASON

CAPE CORAL'S FLOODING THREAT

IT IS IMPORTANT for all citizens and business owners to understand the potential risks of flooding. In 2008, the federal government issued new flood hazard maps for Lee County based on updated engineering studies. Please familiarize yourself with the maps and review the actions you can take to minimize health and property risks associated with flooding.

Flooding in Cape Coral can occur from two causes--heavy rain and storm surge. Aside from localized street flooding, the Cape's stormwater infrastructure has proven to perform well relative to preventing flood losses to homes and businesses during torrential rainstorms. However, it may not have adequate capacity if it rains hard enough for an extended period or if pipes get clogged. The other flood threat, storm surge, is a phenomenon usually associated with hurricanes. Amazingly, the storm surge can be as high as 25 feet in an intense hurricane. The areas most susceptible to storm surge are located near the coastline of Charlotte Harbor, the Caloosahatchee River and Matlacha Pass. Historically, high tides up to 12 feet above normal were reported at Fort Myers and Punta Rasa during the 1926 Miami hurricane. In 1960, Hurricane Donna caused high-water marks of 10 to 11 feet on Estero Island.

In 2004, Hurricane Charley made landfall on the southwest coast of Florida, near Cayo Costa, with maximum sustained winds of 130 knots. Because the eye shrank considerably in the 12 hours before landfall, these extreme winds were confined to a very small area, reducing storm surge potential. During landfall, the local area received an average of 3.91 inches of rainfall. Other municipalities within Florida reported storm surge of more than 7 feet and North Naples reported rainfall of 7.48 inches. Most recently, Hurricane Irma struck Marco Island in September 2017 as a Category 3 hurricane. While wind and flood damage was less destructive than initially feared, wave damage to seawalls within Cape Coral was extensive.

As you can see from the history above, if a hurricane watch is issued, please keep in mind that every hurricane is different. Base an action plan on information specifically pertaining to the incoming storm.

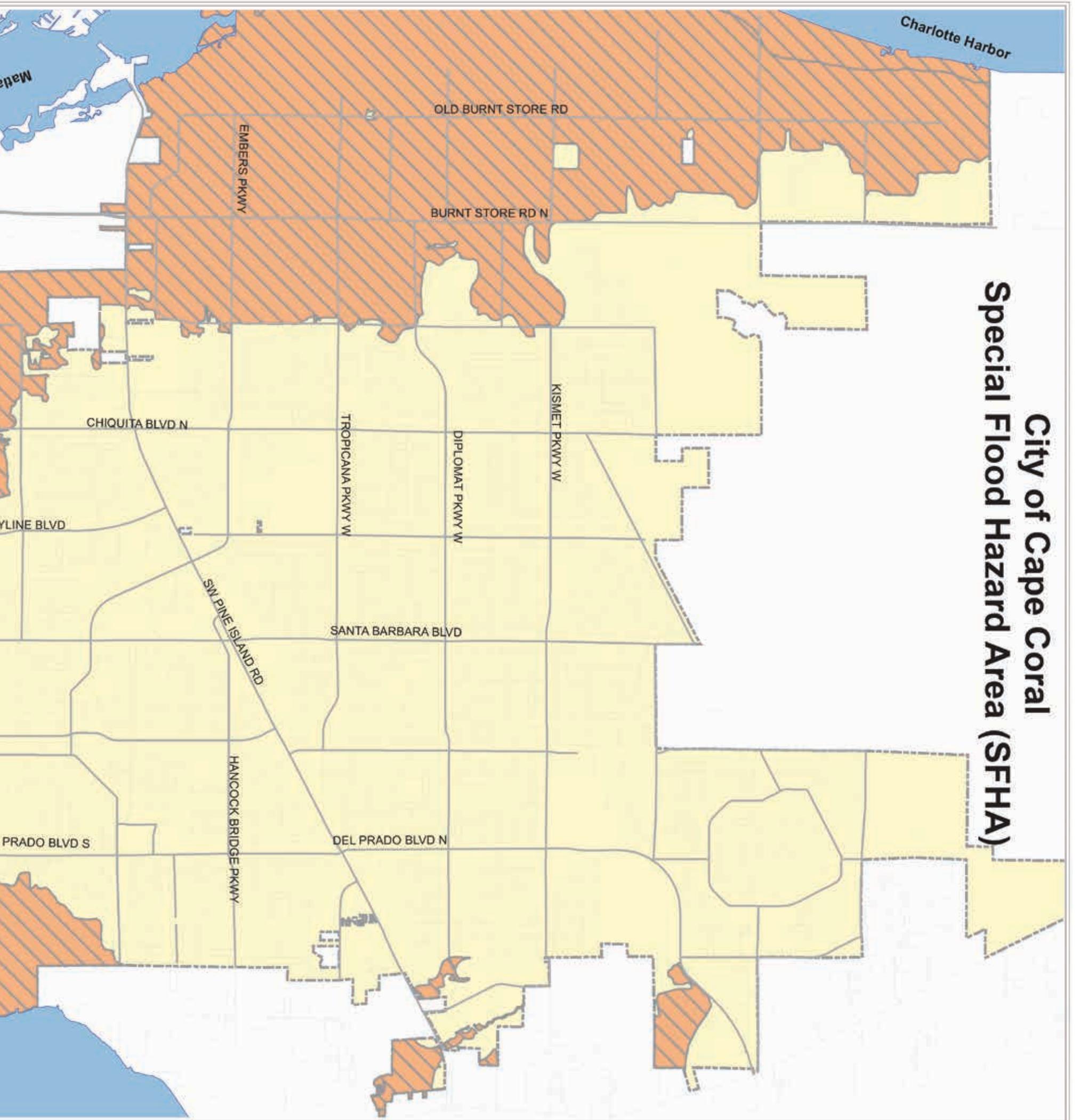
The flood map in this publication is transcribed from large-scale flood maps and shows the "Special Flood Hazard Area" (SFHA) within the City of Cape Coral. The SFHA is the area where floodplain management regulations must be enforced and mandatory purchase of flood insurance applies. The SFHA includes Zones AE and VE. These large-scale flood maps and other flood protection references are available at City Hall and the Cape Coral Public Library. If you would like assistance with reading the map, please call (239) 574-0553 to ask for help from the Planning Division staff.

The following information provides suggestions of actions you can take to protect yourself and your property.

continued on page 12 ►



City of Cape Coral Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA)



Flooding

from page 10

■ What You Can Do

Several of the City's efforts to prevent flooding depend on your cooperation and assistance. **This is how you can help:**

▶ **DO NOT dump or throw anything** into the swales, drainage inlets, canals, basins or river. Dumping into these waters is a violation of City of Cape Coral Code of Ordinances, Section 9-15. Further, Section 9-107 prohibits the sweeping or blowing of vegetative material into stormwater drains, ditches, conveyances, water bodies, wetlands, sidewalks, or roadways. This includes lawn clippings, horticultural trimmings, dirt and fill material, and other debris. Any dirt or lawn clippings blown into the street eventually will be washed into the drainage system. Also, all construction sites are required to have erosion protection devices, as silt and sand can reduce the capacity of the drainage system. If this occurs, the drainage system cannot carry the water away as the system was engineered to do. If you see violations, please notify Code Compliance at (239) 574-0613.

▶ **IF YOUR PROPERTY is next to** a drainage inlet, canal, or river, please keep inlets open and the banks clear of brush and debris.

▶ **ALWAYS CHECK with the Building Division** at (239) 574-0546, before you build on, alter, regrade, or deposit fill on your property. You may need a permit to ensure that your project does not cause drainage problems on other properties nearby. If you see building or filling without a City permit sign posted, please notify Code Compliance at (239) 574-0613.

For additional information on how to prepare for flood events, determine the relative flood risk to your property, estimate your flood insurance premium, and a list of licensed insurance agents who serve your area, visit www.floodsmart.gov.

■ Property Protection Measures

If flooding is predicted, one protection measure that costs nothing is to elevate valuables. This involves putting them on counters, upper cabinets, attics, or upper floors. As Cape Coral is located within a region subject to high winds during hurricanes, consider installing storm shutters and reinforcing your garage door.

Measures to protect a property from flood damage include retrofitting, re-grading your yard, and correcting local drainage problems. If your property has a low finished floor elevation, you may consider retrofitting your structure. If you don't know your property's current floor elevation, you can obtain copies of elevation certificates for buildings that were built since 1993 on the City's website, www.capecoral.net or by calling (239) 574-0411. Retrofitting can include elevating the structure, flood-proofing doors and walls, re-grading, or installing earthen berms and/or concrete walls. Although these remedies may require a considerable investment, these measures may help protect your property during flooding.

City staff is available for site visits to review flooding, drainage, and sewer problems and to provide one-on-one advice to the property owner about property protection (such as retrofitting techniques and drainage improvements). Staff can also offer assistance with your selection process if you need to hire a qualified contractor or consultant to help you solve and/or prevent a particular flooding problem. Please contact the Planning Division at (239) 573-3160, if you need such technical assistance.

If you are interested in learning more about these options, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have publications available on these topics. Many publications are available, free of charge, at the Department of Community Development, the Lee County library or the internet. All development within a floodplain requires a permit. For information on obtaining a permit, please contact the Building Division, 1015 Cultural Park Blvd., Cape Coral, FL 33990, (239) 574-0546.

■ Flood Insurance

Most homeowner's and renter's insurance policies exclude protection from damage caused by flooding. If you don't have flood insurance, talk to your

insurance agent. Structures under construction are also insurable. Almost any building with at least two walls and a roof is insurable against flooding through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which offers affordable, federally-backed insurance. Contents of insurable buildings can be covered by a separate policy, also making flood insurance available to renters. Unless you requested that your flood insurance policy cover the contents, it may only cover the structure. It is possible that flooding waters could cause more damage to the contents than to the structure. If you are in a V-Zone or an A-Zone, you are four times more likely to experience a flood than a fire. Don't wait for the next flood to buy insurance protection.

There is a 30-day waiting period before National Flood Insurance Program coverage takes effect. Contact your insurance agent for more information on rates and coverage.

■ Substantial Improvement Requirements

The National Flood Insurance Program requires that if the cost of reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, or other improvement to a building equals or exceeds 50 percent of the building's market value, then the building must meet current flood zone construction requirements. Substantially damaged buildings also must be brought up to the same standards. Article VI of the City of Cape Coral Land Use and Development Regulations specifies details on flood damage prevention. This information is available at the City Clerk's office and on the City website at www.capecoral.net.

■ Natural and Beneficial Functions of Wetlands

In Cape Coral, the areas most susceptible to tropical storm tidal surge are located near the coastline of Charlotte Harbor, Matlacha Pass and the Caloosahatchee River. These vast areas extend from Burnt Store Marina to just north of Four Mile Cove Ecological Preserve. Most of these areas with the highest susceptibility to flooding are preservation lands owned by the State of Florida. By preserving the native vegetation consisting of salt marshes and mangrove communities, residents of Cape Coral gain significant protection.

The mangroves, in particular, stabilize the shoreline during hurricanes. The mangroves have prop roots, leaves and branches that offer frictional resistance to flowing water. This effect reduces storm erosion and decreases the speed of the flow of tidal inundation and allows the settling of particulate matter. The mangroves use these sediments and the nutrients in the water for growth. Additionally, the mangrove environments provide areas for propagation of marine life, bird life, water quality enhancement for surrounding waters, and aesthetic benefits. It is in the best interest of Cape Coral to make sure that the functional integrity of these areas is not degraded.

■ Emergency Warning System

The Lee County Emergency Operations Center provides the Emergency Warning System for Cape Coral. A hurricane watch for Lee County will be announced if hurricane conditions are possible for our area within the next 36 hours. A Hurricane Watch means it is time to put the early stages of your hurricane plan into action. Tune in to local radio or television stations listed for the latest distribution of emergency information. Severe weather and flood warning threats are also continuously broadcast by the National Weather Service on special weather radios, on Channel 4, 162.475 MHz. Emergency vehicles also may broadcast emergency information over an amplified speaker.

Cape Coral uses a free smartphone app — Ping4alerts! — to instantly notify citizens of public safety concerns. Residents and visitors can download the app on their Apple or Android devices. Ping4alerts! delivers relevant, real-time emergency messages to mobile devices, including up-to-the-minute severe weather advisories and alerts from the National Weather Service. This app is a free iOS and Android app that uses the location-based technology inherent in today's smartphones to

continued on page 13 ▶

TV STATIONS	AFFILIATE	LOCAL/SATELLITE
WUVF-LP	Univision	2
WINK	CBS	11
WTPH-LP	Azteca America	14
WTLE-LP	Unimas	18
WBBH	NBC	20
WZVN	ABC	26
WGCU	PBS	30
WFTX	FOX	36
WWDT-CA	Telemundo	43
WXCW	CW	46
WRXY	CTN (Religious)	49
WLZE-LP	Univision	51

RADIO – FM					
WJIS	88.1	WOLZ	95.3	WHPT	102.5
WBIY	88.3	WRXK	96.1	WJGO	102.9
WDLV	88.7	W243BM	96.5	W277AP	103.3
WAYJ	89.5	WINK	96.9	WXKB	103.9
WGCU	90.1	W247AQ	97.3	WSGL	104.7
WSOR	90.9	WTLQ	97.7	WCVU	104.9
WJYO	91.5	W251AL	98.1	WBTT	105.5
WMYE	91.9	WLVO	98.5	WJPT	106.3
WFSX	92.5	WWCN	99.3	W294AN	106.7
WIKX	92.9	WZJZ	100.1	WCKT	107.1
WWDH	93.3	W263BI	100.5		
WXNX	93.7	WAVV	101.1		
W251BX	94.1	WWGR	101.9		
WARO	94.5	W272BM	102.3		

RADIO – AM			
WQAM	560	WFWN	1240
WAFC	590	WNOG	1270
WAQI	710	WCRM (Spanish)	1350
WJBX	770	WMYR	1410
WWBA	820	WWCL (Spanish)	1440
WINZ	940	WAFZ	1490
WKII	1070	WCCF	1580
WJUA	1200	WCNZ	1660

NOAA Weather Radio

NOAA Weather Radios provide 24-hour continuous broadcasting of current and forecasted weather conditions. The following are the identification or FIPS codes for Lee and our adjoining counties:

- Fort Myers Channel 4 (162.475 MHz) Lee – 012071
- Collier – 012021, Desoto – 012027,
- Charlotte – 012015, Hendry – 012051

WGCU-90.1FM is the Southwest Florida affiliate of the Florida Public Radio Emergency Network, a system created to communicate information statewide before, during and after an emergency.

Stations in the network are equipped to stay on the air even during power outages and will continue to provide information during the recovery of a major weather event or other emergency. Working in partnership with the Florida Division of Emergency Management and the Lee County Emergency Operations Centers, listeners can be assured of having access to the most up-to-date information.



Flooding

deliver notifications within a highly localized area, which ensures accuracy.

In addition to Ping4alerts!, Lee County has the CodeRED high-speed telephone emergency notification service. The CodeRED system gives County officials the ability to deliver pre-recorded emergency telephone information to targeted areas or the entire county at a rate of up to 60,000 calls per hour. Visit the Lee County website at www.LeeEOC.com or call (239) 477-1228 to enter your contact information in the CodeRED database.

If the County declares an evacuation advisory or evacuation order for your area, please heed the warning and give yourself plenty of time to leave the area. Because any storm is likely to interrupt electric power, it is important that you have a radio or television that can operate on battery power and that you have a supply of fresh batteries. Be prepared for interruptions of service from cable television and telephone providers.

Flood Safety:

- **DO NOT walk through flowing water.** Drowning is the No. 1 cause of flood deaths, mostly during flash floods. Currents can be deceptive and 6 inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. If you must walk in standing water, use a pole or stick to ensure that the ground is still there before you step further. Flood waters also can carry microorganisms capable of causing disease via skin contact.
- **DO NOT drive through a flooded area.** More people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Do not attempt to drive around road barriers as the road or bridge may be washed out.
- **AVOID power lines and electrical wires.** The No. 2 cause of death is electrocution. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to LCEC or City emergency management offices. Disconnect electricity and gas lines prior to flooding.



- **LOOK OUT for animals, especially snakes.** Small animals flooded out of their environment may seek shelter in homes. Use a pole or stick to poke to turn things over and scare away small animals.
- **LOOK before you step.** After a flood, the ground and floors may be covered with debris, including broken glass and nails. Floors and stairs covered with mud can be very slippery.
- **NEVER USE a generator indoors or in an attached garage.** A portable generator uses an internal combustion engine that emits deadly carbon monoxide. Place the generator outside – where exhaust fumes will not enter the house. Only operate it outdoors in a well-ventilated, dry area, away from air intakes to the home, and protected from direct exposure to rain. After Hurricane Charley in 2004, the Cape Coral Fire Department conducted more than 400 safety inspections of households in the City using generators. One-fourth of the homes had potentially dangerous levels of carbon monoxide in their houses, and 10 people required hospital treatment. If you own a generator, consider purchasing a carbon monoxide detector.

Hurricane Evacuation Safety Tips

Experts who have studied the problem of storm damage and ways to mitigate the consequences formulated the recommendations provided herein. Additional information is available in the *Lee County All Hazards Guide*, prepared by Lee County Emergency Management. The guide is available at City Hall, Fire & Police Headquarters, the library, the post office, and online at www.leeec.com.

By considering this information, attending hurricane seminars, purchasing flood insurance, and tuning into media broadcasts and other sources of information, you may prevent loss of property and life.

For other information regarding flood protection/information, please visit the City's website www.capecoral.net/departments/community_development/flood_protection.php or contact Planning Division staff at (239) 573-3160.

New Maps Are Coming

Residents and property owners in Cape Coral should be aware that the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) will be revised sometime in 2020, for the first time since 2008. This could have major effects upon insurance premiums, or for current X-zoned properties that are brought into the AE-zone, could cause such properties to require flood insurance upon development. Please check the City's flood information webpage periodically for further updates. ■

HURRICANE LANDSCAPING:

Prepare now – *don't wait until a storm is approaching*

The Atlantic hurricane season begins June 1 and ends November 30. August and September tend to be the most active months of hurricane season.

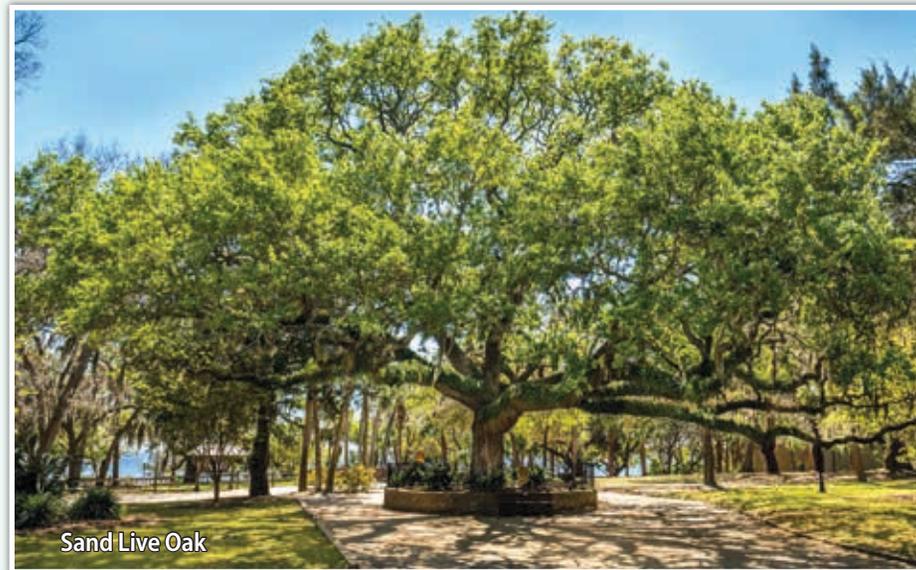
Your family's safety is most important during a hurricane. One of the things you can do to help keep your family and home safe is to prepare your landscape properly. Please do not wait until a storm is headed toward Cape Coral to trim trees and do other yard work. Typically, trash/recycling/horticulture collection services are often overwhelmed in the days before a storm makes landfall. Landfills often close days in advance of a storm and horticulture may not be collected. This debris could become airborne during a storm if left at the curb, which could injure someone or damage property.

■ Tips to help hurricane-proof your landscape

◆ **Right Tree, Right Place** – Choose varieties of trees that are well-suited for your landscape. Plant larger trees away from your home, power lines, and other structures. This reduces the risk of branches—or of trees themselves—falling on your home or knocking down power lines.

◆ **Choose Wind-Resistant Species** – Some trees are more wind-resistant than others. Suggested wind-resistant varieties include sabal palms and smaller palm varieties such as manila and pygmy date. Gumbo limbo, live oak, and sea grape also have high survival rates after hurricanes. On the other hand, a more vulnerable tree during storms is one with a high center of gravity, a dense canopy, a decayed trunk, two or more trunks, or shallow roots. Shallow roots result from shallow soil or a high water table.

◆ **Regular Pruning and Maintenance** – Assess trees for branches that are



Sand Live Oak

dying, damaged, or weakly connected to the trunk. Regular pruning has several benefits. It promotes healthy growth; removes dead, dying, or diseased limbs; and can reshape the tree to be more resistant to wind damage. Thinning or reducing the crown of the tree helps to reduce the trunk movement during a hurricane. If branches are large or high in the tree, it's best to hire a certified arborist to prune.

◆ Planting in Groups or Masses

– Planting groups of mixed trees together can greatly enhance wind resistance. The trees buffer each other as well as your property and other landscape plants.

After a hurricane, remember that your landscape needs to be maintained. Damaged trees need to be removed or restored. Tall, slender pine trees that were part of a forest before suburban development are susceptible to storm damage. These trees relied on one another for wind resistance and support during storms. Without each other, they are unprotected from storm damage. Consider removing tall, slender trees from your landscape for safety.

■ Planting

Trees planted in the last five years and very old, large trees are the most susceptible to hurricane damage. Young trees don't have an extensive root system to anchor them in wind, while old trees often have some decayed and weak branches. Large trees should be evaluated (checked) by a certified arborist for defects that are not visible from the ground.

■ Pruning

Correct pruning is the most important part of helping trees survive hurricanes. Train young trees so they develop a sturdy, well-spaced framework of healthy branches along a dominant trunk. Maintain this form as far up into the tree as possible by reducing the length of competing stems and branches.

For trees larger than about 15 feet tall, hire a certified arborist to prune your trees before the hurricane season. The arborist will remove dead branches that can fall on houses, cars, and people. Overly long branches should be shortened and branches with cracks removed or shortened. Branches with the same diameter as the trunk will be shortened and the outer edges (not the interior) of the canopy will be thinned, making your tree less likely to be blown over. Low branches that are close to your roof should be removed or shortened, as well. Be sure to have your trees evaluated by a professional about every two years.

■ Questions

The University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) provides research-based information with the help of Master Gardeners to communities across the state. The Gardening Solutions program of UF/IFAS brings homeowners the best information about Florida-Friendly plants and sustainable landscape practices. ■



The Cape Coral Police Department is reminding bicyclists to please use the proper hand signals to let drivers and other cyclists know you are turning or stopping. Be smart and ride safe.

The Cape Coral Fire Department Has a New Look

Local company redesigns logo

The Cape Coral Fire Department recently revealed its new and redesigned logo. The new logo is more modern while incorporating fire department traditions and honoring the past.

The logo features:

- **The 1962 date of establishment.** The Cape Coral Fire Department was the first form of local government in Cape Coral. The Department's establishment predates the incorporation of the City, which was in 1970.
- **The bird located in the center** of the logo is part of the City's official seal. It has been part of the Cape Coral Fire Department's patch since the Department joined the City.
- **The waves (or marine rope** depending on how you see it) around the center of the new logo represent Cape Coral's waterfront wonderland due to its location and 400 miles of canals.

While it will take time before the old logo is completely phased out, the Cape Coral Fire Department is excited to share the new official logo with the community. The Cape Coral Fire Department thanks Cape Coral company, Boost Creative, for completing the redesign. ■



Old logo.



New logo.

FERTILIZER RESTRICTIONS Aim to Keep Harmful Nutrients from Waterways

The City's fertilizer ordinance was adopted in 2010 and regulates the application of fertilizer. Beginning June 1, the use of fertilizers containing nitrogen or phosphorus is prohibited in the City. The fertilizer restrictions apply to citizens and commercial lawn services.

This regulation was enacted to keep harmful nutrients found in fertilizer from washing off from lawns into storm drains during the rainy months. These nutrients negatively impact the city's canals and surrounding waters, leading to poor water quality and algal blooms.

Key points of the fertilizer ordinance:

- **Fertilizer containing nitrogen and phosphorus** (the first 2 numbers on a fertilizer label) is **NOT permitted** between June 1 and September 30.
- **No fertilizer use is allowed** of any kind if a **storm watch or warning** is in effect.
- **No fertilizer can be used within 10 feet of any body of water** – measured from the top of a seawall or edge of water.
- **Fertilizer must include at least 50 percent of slow-release nitrogen** during the remainder of the year (January-May and October-December).
- **No grass clippings or vegetative debris may be swept** or blown into stormwater drains, conveyances, bodies of waters, sidewalks or roadways.
- **Violations of the ordinance may result in fines of \$100-\$500.**

Staff is working with City Council members on potential changes to the Fertilizer Ordinance to provide more protection to the local waterways. The current ordinance was adopted in 2010. ■

City Partners with Waste Pro for Bulk Item Disposal Events

Mark your calendars for August 1 and November 7

The City has partnered with Waste Pro to offer Cape Coral residents free events to drop off unwanted bulk items for disposal. The next bulk item disposal events are set for Saturday, August 1, and Saturday, November 7.

Residents can bring unwanted items to 1020 Cultural Park Boulevard, which is a parking lot located next to the Cape Coral Police Department building, between 7 a.m. until 11 a.m.

These events are an added service for Cape Coral residents. In May, 331 vehicles dropped off more than 58,000 pounds of bulk items for disposal. Waste Pro also picks up residential bulk items curbside at no charge.

Acceptable items include:

- **Construction Debris** (less than 2 yards)
- **Appliances**
- **Mattresses**
- **Furniture**
- **Electronics**
- **Clothing**



Waste Pro staff assist residents with unloading items during drop off events.

Proof of Cape Coral residency is required to drop off items. Proof of residency may include photo identification with a Cape Coral address or photo identification and a utility bill with an active Cape Coral utility account. This is a residential program and commercial building materials will not be accepted.

Household chemical waste (fuel, paint, solvents, propane tanks) **will not be accepted** and should be taken to the Lee County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility located at 6441 Topaz Court, Fort Myers.

Cape Coral City Council recently approved a new contract with Waste Pro to provide trash collection services. The new contract, which begins in October, will provide weekly bulk item curbside collection. In the coming months, each property will be assigned a bulk item collection day that will be assigned similarly to residential trash collection. ■

Police Department Responds to Current Events

In the days and weeks since the tragic death of George Floyd, we have been having open and frank conversations with members of our community about this incident, as well as broader topics as they relate to police/community interactions. We believe that these conversations are vital to promoting and maintaining transparency with our community. Real community policing and partnerships are not only forged during “good times” ...they are equally crucial during uncomfortable times; some would say even more so. The Cape Coral Police Department welcomes these conversations as we value transparency, and quite frankly, we are proud of our track record and high standards of accountability.

We wanted to compile many of the questions we’ve received, along with highlights from some conversations we have had. We believe that others may have these same questions for their hometown police department but may not have had the opportunity to speak with us. Therefore, we are making this information available to you, our customers.

Many across our country have called for a set of “National Standards” for law enforcement these past few weeks. We agree. The Cape Coral Police Department is a nationally accredited agency, and we have been since 1989. We are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, or CALEA for short. CALEA mandates that we meet or exceed 459 industry standards...best practices defined by subject matter experts in law enforcement. These standards range from mandated bias-based training to stringent use of force reporting, ensuring that we remain at the forefront of community expectations. These standards and proofs of compliance, which encompass department policies and procedures, are reviewed annually by Compliance Service Members from CALEA. We then have onsite inspections at our agency to physically inspect all of these standards and proofs of compliance every four years. We are a Flagship Agency and have been designated as a Gold Standard agency by this accrediting body, the most respected in the profession.

Our Communications section is also accredited by CALEA and must comply with 205 standards and proofs. These standards are reviewed annually, and we then have onsite inspections at our agency to physically inspect all of these standards and proofs of compliance every four years.

The Cape Coral Police Department goes an extra step. The State of Florida’s Commission for Florida Accreditation (CFA) accredits Cape Coral Police Department, mandating that we adhere to an additional 92 industry standards.

Additionally, our Forensics Unit is independently accredited. This voluntary accreditation ensures that we are meeting or exceeding accepted national industry standards in these respective and highly specialized fields. Cape Coral Police Department is the only municipal police department in Florida accredited in the areas of Law Enforcement, Forensics, and Communications.

The Cape Coral Police Department was one of the first (if not the first) law enforcement agency in the region to implement a body-worn camera policy. We have voluntarily worn BWCs since 2015. Our BWC program provides several benefits in addition to the documentation of police/citizen encounters. The BWC program helps us identify training needs through regular review of what our officers are doing. It has led to a reduction in complaints, even proven some allegations of misconduct to be unfounded. Finally, the BWC program has led to a decrease in injuries to both our officers and citizens. Our policy, General Order C-75, mandates that any police/citizen encounter, from asking for directions to using force, be recorded. Any failure to adhere to this policy results in disciplinary action.

Our officers receive training in bias-based policing annually, and we take it seriously. Our organizational culture does not

promulgate bias-based or racist behavior. Our Bias-based Profiling policy is General Order B-32. To that end, we strive for representation of our service population. This means that we recruit and hire to reflect the demographics of our community. Cape Coral is a diverse community made up of many different cultures, backgrounds, beliefs, and languages. So is our police department; we are made up of African American, Caucasian, Latino, Asian-American, Men, Women, LGBTQ, with rich and diverse backgrounds and experiences. In other words, we don’t tolerate those who are intolerant.

When it comes to recruiting and hiring, we conduct a thorough background complete with a deep dive into an applicant’s past (and present). This process involves things like visits with neighbors, employers, a comprehensive psychological examination, and combing through social media accounts. Screening to ensure that an applicant will meet our department, as well as the community, standards are paramount. Also, we have required that our officers pursue their college education since 1994. We require over 1500 hours of training for our new hires, including the police academy, state certification, pre-deployment, and field training. This training must be completed with a high level of competency before new officers can work independently. All of our sworn officers require continuing education yearly on topics such as domestic violence, bias-based policing, defensive tactics, de-escalation training, cultural diversity, and more.

The complaint process is also a topic of our community conversations. At the Cape Coral Police Department, we investigate all complaints from citizens. It makes no difference in the method of the complaint: In-person, telephone, email, even anonymous complaints of misconduct are all investigated rigorously. Any complaint that is reported to the police department from an officer’s demeanor to, excessive force or discrimination, whether externally or internally reported, are investigated thoroughly resulting in a finding. Our procedures and policies have been vetted through CALEA, CFA, and the State of Florida Fraternal Order of Police; General Order B-30 and Standard Operating Procedures CPD-13.

By our accreditation designation, we publish our complaint, internal affairs, and use of force data annually. We have done so since 1989. See for yourself: www.capecops.com/publications

In 2019, the Cape Coral Police Department had nearly 178,000 citizen/police encounters. Of those encounters, 3,302 resulted in an arrest or 1.85 percent. Of those, only 42 arrests out of 3,302 resulted in a use of force. That means only 1.27 percent of our arrests required the use of force or 0.023 percent of our total citizen/police encounters resulted in a use of force of any kind. Twenty-three hundredths of one percent! The statistics also prove that our use of force is not disproportionate to any race, gender, or class.

The Cape Coral Police Department received 13 external inquiries (complaints) in 2019. Five of those 13 complaints were sustained. The most common complaint is for administrative policy violations or rudeness. Examples of administrative policy violations include things like failure to submit paperwork on time or tardiness. The number of Complaints and Use of Force for the Cape Coral Police Department overall has been on a downward trend over the last decade. The Cape Coral Police Department received zero complaints of bias-based policing, excessive force, or violation of civil rights. We believe that these statistics are the result of a strenuous recruiting process, cutting-edge training, and paying attention to the small issues before they grow into more significant problems.

Our agency also has an early intervention program, whereby we identify patterns of complaints, absenteeism, tardiness, attitude, or other factors and intervene on the employee’s

behalf to ensure there are no underlying issues. Early intervention ensures that the employee receives the services they may need if they are in crisis. In cases of problem employees, they are corrected or removed.

We are proud of the men and women of the Cape Coral Police Department and the work they perform each day for our community. And we are also especially proud and grateful for the partnership we have with the citizens of Cape Coral. Together, we enjoy the safest city in Florida for violent crime (with populations greater than 100K residents). Not only are we the safest city for violent crime, but we also had the highest reduction in violent crime and non-violent crime than any other comparable city for 2019!

We could not achieve these results without the hard work and dedication of all of our police department employees and the cooperation and public trust of our residents. Trust between law enforcement agencies and the public they protect and serve is essential. It is the key to the stability of our community and our nation. We are grateful and appreciative to have that here in the City of Cape Coral. This leads to the success of the effective delivery of policing services.

Police Chief David Newlan issued the following statement after the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis:

“As a nation, we are all shocked and outraged by the actions of four Minneapolis Police Department officers as they arrested George Floyd. Floyd tragically died as a result of the encounter, whereby the officers acted outside of acceptable training, policy, and tactics.

As a 30-year law enforcement professional, and current Chief of Police, I have never seen or heard of a tactic whereby an officer kneels on an individual’s neck. Much less someone already handcuffed, prone, and non-combative.

I, along with my officers, share the outrage and disappointment with the actions taken by these former officers.

I also felt the need to make a public statement for myself as well as my officers. I could not let silence on the matter be construed as acceptance of these criminal actions.

I am of the belief that all legitimate law enforcement officers are equally disgusted by what transpired that day, and I am confident that these former officers will be prosecuted just like any other criminal.

I grieve for the Floyd family and all others who are mourning his loss and also mourning a tremendous setback in police-community relations. Here in Cape Coral, we work awfully hard to ensure we have community support through our actions.

We demand accountability from our officers and demand that all lives are treated with dignity and respect; Even those who are being arrested.

Yes, there are times that we have to use force. However, we are trained to utilize reasonable force necessary to accomplish lawful objectives. Rest assured, any deviation from these standards is not tolerated.

Valuing our American freedoms, protecting life, and serving others are in our organizational DNA.

Speaking of American freedoms, we have seen images of peaceful protests that turned violent across the country. The Cape Coral Police Department supports American citizens in their constitutional right to peacefully assemble. We will even be present to protect that right and ensure everyone’s safety.

However, we will not stand idly by and let violence and the destruction of property occur.

In closing, I believe that we, as Americans, will get through this challenge, like we have countless others. Working together, with trust and respect, justice will be done. And this, I believe, can be George Floyd’s legacy.” ■

Economic Development News

Coworking Spaces – New Normal in the Cape?

What is a coworking space? Coworking is an arrangement in which several workers from different companies share an open or private space, allowing cost savings and convenience through the use of common space, equipment, utilities, and receptionist and custodial services. In some cases, refreshments, seminars, and additional educational programs are provided to members of the coworking space.

This new trend is popping up all over the U.S. Coworking encourages people to collaborate and create a base for working sessions, brainstorming ideas, meetings, and seminars. Creating a coworking space in Cape Coral could result in less commutes over the bridges and more patronization of local businesses such as restaurants, cleaners, banks, and retail outlets. Coworking spaces would be a boom to the local economy, cut down on commutes and traffic generation, and reduce pollution. Ultimately, it is the desire of the City's Economic Development Office to adapt to the changes rapidly taking place around us. We want to create a space where residents and businesses can flourish in a collaborative, safe, and productive environment.

The Cape Coral Economic Development Office needs your help to better understand the need for a co-working space in the Cape. Please contact Marketing Specialist Madelon Miuccio via email at MMiuccio@capecoral.net or telephone (239) 573-3081 to let the City know if you would be interested in renting co-working space.

Pine Island Road Development Continues

While the COVID-19 pandemic may have slowed development in some areas, construction on Pine Island Road continues. More than \$200 million in development is underway or planned for permitting by 2021. There are only about 300 acres of undeveloped land remaining along the Pine Island Road corridor. The average size of the undeveloped parcels are about 10-15 acres, and the supply is quickly diminishing.

Projects in the works:

- **Cape Coral Commons** – This retail development sits on the corner of Del Prado Boulevard and Pine Island Road and will include favorite restaurants such as First Watch and Firehouse Subs. Construction has commenced.
- **Enterprise Car Rental** – The new car rental center is under construction on the north side of Pine Island Road about a half mile west of Andalusia Boulevard. It should be completed before the end of 2020.

Projects in permitting:

- **Tractor Supply** – This highly-anticipated retail shop is in permitting and is planned for 2050 SW Pine Island Road.
- **Pine Island Market** – This development features a gas station and around 10,000 square feet of retail space. The planned project is in permitting and should break ground by year's end at the northeast corner of Pine Island Road and Chiquita Boulevard.



Apartment Complexes on the Rise in the Cape

To meet the growing appetite of new Cape Coral residents, multi-family developers continue to advance projects across the city.

Currently, there are at least 4 multi-family developments under construction representing more than 800 units, which may come to fruition by late Spring 2021. According to a 2019 multi-family study commissioned by the City's Economic Development Office, there remains a demand for the production of 1,500 multi-family units across the city each year for at least the next five years.

So, there's much more need for construction of attractive and modern developments. Here's a snapshot of those under construction:

- **Springs at Cape Coral:** A Wisconsin-based developer is constructing a 292 multi-family development along Pine Island Road about a half mile east of NE 24th Place



Springs of Cape Coral development rendering

- **The Cape at Savona:** A North Dakota developer will celebrate the grand opening of the first phase of a 319 multi-family development on Savona Parkway, just west of Chiquita Boulevard in May



The Cape at Savona apartments rendering

- **Surfside Apartments:** Another 220 multi-family development is under construction just east of the Surfside Shopping Center along Veterans Parkway

There's also opportunities for both multi-family and mixed-use development in the South Cape. More rooftops lead to more restaurants, retail, and ultimately employers. Clustering developments near traffic nodes such as Cape Coral Parkway and Palm Tree Boulevard, Veterans Parkway and Surfside Boulevard and in key sections along Pine Island Road will result in reducing traffic congestion since workers will have shorter travel distances to work. These developments will also result in better utilization of land, rather than sprawled development and increased property values. Mixed-use developments and lifestyle centers that showcase a mix of office, hospitality, retail, restaurants and residents is the wave of the future. For more information on opportunities to promote multi-family development please check the zoning districts throughout the city and contact the Economic Development Office for a tour. ■

2019 Employee Association Scholarship Winners

The Cape Coral Employee Association has selected the 2019 scholarship winners. Congratulations to **Sage Calvao** of Mariner High School and **Libby Bickelhaupt** of Fort Myers High School.

The Employee Association awards two scholarships annually to high school seniors based on essay submissions. The amount awarded each year is determined by the Employee Association's available funding. The 2019 scholarships are each worth \$350.

■ **Upcoming high school seniors - set a reminder to apply next year.** Applications also can be obtained through an Employee Association representative. Applications are available December 1 and submissions are due by December 31. To be eligible, applicants must attend high school in the City of Cape Coral or be an Employee Association member's immediate family member. For more information contact, rmurphy@capecoral.net. ■

GET CONNECTED
The City of Cape Coral is social
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Most City Utility Customers to be Impacted by Utility Billing Cycle Changes

The City has outgrown its existing utility billing cycle map and plans to change the monthly billing dates for most utility customers. This change is necessary due to the tremendous growth of Cape Coral, particularly with new customers obtaining water/sewer service as a result of new construction and the Utilities Extension Program, combined with plans for new utility billing software. This change will allow the City to organize meter reading and field service account activities efficiently and logically.

Over many years, the billing cycle map was edited multiple times. Last year, the City was able to bring all meter reads in-house and now recognizes the need to develop a billing cycle map that is logical, economical, and allows for growth.

On average, the Billing Division has 20 days each month to read and bill meters. Currently, 35 different billing cycles are spread throughout the city in an inefficient pattern. The changes will divide the entire city into 20 billing cycles.

This change will impact most City of Cape Coral utility customers.

A notification letter will be sent at least 30 days in advance to allow customers time to make any adjustments for autopay, bank draft, etc. Once the accounts are moved, a colorful insert will be included in a customer's billing statement advising that the change has taken place and to make note of the new bill date. Push notifications are planned for customers enrolled in E-billing.



Transition plan details:

- The change to your billing date may result in an earlier or later billing date.
- If a change to your billing date is made, the new billing date will be effective from that point forward.
- Any change to the bill date will result in a change to the due date of your utility bill.
- If you are currently enrolled in autopay through your financial institution, E-Bill or through the City's bank draft, there will be no interruption in these services. You will, however, need to make note of your new bill date and due date, as these will impact the date your payment drafts from your account.
- During the transitional billing period, the bill will be adjusted to ensure minimum base charges are billed at the monthly rate, or pro-rated to a lower daily rate if the billing period is less than 27 days.

If you have any questions about this information, please contact our Customer Billing Services staff at (239) 574-7722, press '3' then '5' to speak with a Customer Service Technician, who will be glad to assist you. ■

Utilities' Earns Florida WEA Award

The City of Cape Coral Utilities Department achieved the prestigious Earle B. Phelps award from the Florida Water Environment Association (FWEA) at their annual awards conference.



The Florida Water Environment Association gives the Earle B. Phelps Award annually to recognize wastewater treatment facilities, which have maintained the highest removal of major pollution-causing constituents prior to reuse for irrigation purposes.

This year's recognition was unusual, in that the FWEA's scheduled conference in Orlando was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, however, the awards were presented in a virtual ceremony. ■

Oasis High School Hires Former Division-1 Assistant Head Football Coach and SWFL Native Jeff Love as Head Football Coach

Oasis High School recently hired Jeff Love to be the Sharks' new head football coach. Oasis High School is the only high school among the City's charter schools. Other municipal Charter Schools include Oasis North Elementary, Oasis South Elementary, and Oasis Middle.

Love has more than a decade of experience in college athletics and is a Punta Gorda native. He is returning to Florida after a one-year stint as the assistant head football coach at Santa Margarita High School in Southern California.

"We are very excited to welcome Coach Love to the Oasis family. I feel his experience at the collegiate level will provide valuable mentorship and perspective for our players as they navigate high school and beyond," said Oasis High Principal Dr. Christina Britton.

While at Santa Margarita High, Love coached the quarterbacks and coordinated all operations of the Eagle football program including purchasing, fundraising, travel, video, and booster club. The Eagles compete in the Trinity League, which is often known as one of the most competitive conferences of high school football in both California and the United States. Before coaching in California, Love spent 14 years in college athletics as a coach or in administrative roles in video and operations. From 2016-2018 Love was part of the University of Kansas football staff. Love also served as a member of the

inaugural coaching staff at Houston Baptist University, building the Division 1 program from inception to competition. Love began coaching at Occidental College in 2011, a Division III school in Los Angeles, where he coached the secondary and handled program recruiting efforts. Earlier in his career, Love served as video coordinator at both Kansas University and Nevada. He also held assistant video positions at Washington State and UCF.

"We are grateful to Dr. Britton, the administration team, and the entire Oasis community for entrusting us with this awesome opportunity. My family and I are thrilled to move back to the great state of Florida, and we cannot wait to get started," said new Sharks Head Coach Jeff Love. "Our goal will be to create a championship culture by providing the tools for each student to have a focused, positive mindset to tackle the day in front of them. In our opinion, sports, and growth in general, is about creating a mentality. The bi-product of that mentality will be graduating students and competing for championships."

The Oasis High School Sharks are set to open training camp in late July if circumstances allow. For more information about Oasis High School, visit the website at www.oasishighschool.net. ■



The Cape Coral Animal Shelter Opens During Trying Times

By Cape Coral Animal Shelter Executive Director Liz McCauley

After years of planning, fundraising, building, preparing and planning, the Cape Coral Animal Shelter opened its doors on March 19. Four days later, due to the COVID-19 pandemic we were forced to close to the public, doing adoptions by appointment only.

Under very trying circumstances, we saved over 230 animals and found loving, forever homes for over 160 of those animals in our first eight weeks of operation. Such as Daisy, who was dumped because her owner believed he could catch COVID-19 from her and is now adopted to a wonderful forever family. Or Bouncer, who came into our care from DeSoto County after being found in a plastic bag on the side of the road.

We have also assisted five different municipal animal control shelters and four rescue groups ease their burden. We assisted many families who could no longer care for their animals by giving them a haven until they find their new forever home. We found foster homes for over 50 animals to ease our burden of being at capacity and understaffed.

And this is just the beginning. In order to support the lifesaving work of our shelter and to provide a much-needed service to our community, our low-cost, state of the art veterinary clinic has opened for business. We believe now more than ever people are going to need a low-cost alternative to keep their pets healthy, happy, and out of the shelter. Our services will include vaccines, spay/neuter surgery, illnesses and wellness visits, and the sale of flea and heartworm preventative and prescription food. Due to the generosity of our donors, we were able to purchase such equipment as a digital x-ray machine, an ultrasound machine and a digital dental x-ray machine which will allow



us to do more extensive and difficult procedures. CCAS is bringing low cost veterinary care to the community to fulfil our mission to engage a special

bond between people and animals by means of adoption services, medical care, education and training for the prevention of cruelty and abandonment.

Opening the shelter during a virus pandemic was certainly not in the plans, but we are pushing forward with our mission and persevering. We could not have done this without the support of our amazing staff, volunteers, donors and local community. We have seen firsthand what our community is capable of, and that's why we know that we will make it through this tough time together. *Thank you!* ■

Solid Waste Contract with Waste Pro Renewed

New contract provides more benefits to residents

Earlier this month the City Council approved a seven-year contract, with a possible three-year extension with Waste Pro to continue to provide solid waste collection services in the Cape Coral. The new contract starts on October 1.

The new contract offers residents a designated weekly pickup day for large items that don't fit into normal trash containers. A citywide schedule for the collection of large items for disposal is being developed and will be announced in the coming weeks. This schedule will be similar to the trash collection schedule that is based on property location. Oversized items may include appliances, furniture, and mattresses. Items should be neatly separated and properly prepared for everyone's safety. A fee could be incurred for piles of comingled items. Large items should be set out after 5 p.m. the evening before the designated collection day and no later than 6 a.m. on collection day.

Waste Pro will continue to host quarterly "Bulk Item Drop Off Events" for Cape Coral residents. These events provide another option to dispose of



A non-compliant pile of trash like the one pictured above may result in fees for removal.



large items. Residents bring their items to a designated location in the city and Waste Pro staff assist with unloading any item. While these free events have been successful, these events were not re-

quired under the current solid waste contract.

The new contract provides for a seven percent renewal rate increase in the first year and a one percent increase for years two and three of the contract. Additionally, there will be an annual consumer price index (CPI) increase for years two through seven of the contract, if approved each year by the City Council.

The recently approved agreement also includes a process for non-compliant trash. Waste Pro and the City's Code Compliance Division will be working together on the non-compliant process to remove large trash piles promptly. Non-compliant trash, which is often the result of move-outs, will be removed and the property owner will be held financially responsible for removal costs. ■

Cape Coral Prom 2020

OASIS HIGH
SUNDAY, JULY 26

ISLAND COAST HIGH
WEDNESDAY, JULY 29

NORTH FORT MYERS HIGH
MONDAY, JULY 27

MARINER HIGH
THURSDAY, JULY 30

IDA BAKER HIGH
TUESDAY, JULY 28

CAPE CORAL HIGH
FRIDAY, JULY 31

Cape Coral Prom 2020 is being hosted by the Cape Coral Rotary Foundation and Mayor Joe Coviello with support from community sponsors

Renovated Observation Tower Opens at Rotary Park

The observation tower at Rotary Park has finally reopened after several years of being closed to the public. This is great news for birders and anyone wishing to get a bird's eye view of the surrounding area.



The top landing stands about 40 feet off the ground and visitors to the Tower can see over the treetops all around the preserve. From the top, if you look closely to the southwest, you can see the roof of a shorter observation tower that is located at the Glover Bight boardwalk.

A labor of love and tenacity, all three Rotary Clubs of Cape Coral were involved with this renovation project. They took care of everything from fully funding the project, to the design, permitting, quotes, choice of contractor, and all the organizational work required for a project of this magnitude.

The tower was originally located at

Four Mile Cove Ecological Preserve until the trees at Eco Park grew taller than the tower. In the late 1990s, the tower was moved and relocated to Rotary Park by Rotarians. The tower stood for several years and weathered many storms until it was closed to the public. It was during that timeframe that the tower was subject to a great deal of vandalism and needed significant repairs.

The most recent renovation included replacing nearly everything except the pilings. Rotary Park's observation tower has new stairs, new railings, and new landings. It is a beautiful sight to behold and park staff is eager for visitors to return to the park and check out the renovated tower.

The City would like to extend a huge thank you to the Rotary Clubs of Cape Coral for this amazing gift to the community. ■

Be A Good Neighbor: Pick Up After Your Pets

Picking it up helps to control poo-llution

The City is reminding pet owners to be good neighbors by picking up after their pets. Rain flows across yards, streets, and parks to swales and storm drains in the city that connect to canals and other waterways. Pet waste that is not picked up will eventually end up in these waterways.

There is a misconception that pet waste acts as a natural fertilizer, however, dog poop is high in nitrogen and phosphorus and contains more bacteria than human, cow, horse, mouse, rabbit, and all other wild animal waste. These nutrients and bacteria negatively impact our waterways. Pets and wild animal waste are major sources of water contamination.

You can make a difference by being a responsible pet owner. Be prepared and carry bags with you to pick up your pet's waste. Please deposit any bags with waste into a trash can. Do not leave these bags on the side of the street in your neighborhood or along a walkway in a park.

Picking up dog waste protects water quality and it also keeps our parks and neighborhoods clean and safe for everyone to enjoy. ■



Rain washes
poo-llution into
our canals...

PLEASE
PICK IT UP



#don'ttextanddrive



STOP TEXTING & DRIVING

Texting and driving is one of the most dangerous forms of distracted driving. In fact, the average text sent or read in a car takes a driver's eyes off the road for 5 seconds. 1 second is more than enough time to get in a life-altering accident.

#don'ttextanddrive

Cape Coral Police Department

