



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019



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*The County Administrator's Annual Report recognizes some of the true difference makers in our organization of 1,900 public servants who perform work for this community each day of the year.*

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Manatee County Board of County Commissioners  
1112 Manatee Ave. W., Bradenton, FL 34205

### 2019 A YEAR OF CHANGE

When our longtime County Administrator and Deputy County Administrator retired last year, they took with them a combined 90 years of public service! Following in their footsteps is a big job, but it's been an exciting year tackling that challenge, especially with two new Deputy County Administrators by my side: John Osborne, the County's longtime Planning Official, and Karen Stewart, our former Economic Development Official.

Together we've introduced a new Results First approach within Manatee County Government, encouraging staff to think critically about their desired outcomes, to set milestones and targets and to measure benchmarks. Using this approach, I created a strategic plan for my first year encompassing 10 Results First Initiatives.

We've continued to move at a fast pace and accomplished a great deal in 2019, despite so many new faces among our leadership team. That success stems from clear and meaningful direction from County Commissioners, strong leadership from the County Administrator's Office and the buy-in from our tight-knit team of Department Directors and employees.

Together we will continue to work in 2020 toward Results First goals with a work ethic infused with Accountability, Civility and Ethics.



*Cheri Q. Coryea*

**CHERI CORYEA**  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR



# Results First Initiatives

- Enhanced Communication
- Adopt Two-Year Balanced Budget
- Expand Innovation
- Automation Conversion
- Administrative Policy and Procedure Updates
- Implement Succession Planning Format
- Align Department Projects
- Five-Year Plan Completion
- Build Security Culture
- Land Development Code Amendments

Browsing this report, you'll see icons denoting achievements that align with each of these initiatives.



*Sunset over Palma Sola Bay*



# Building and Development Services



DIRECTOR  
**John Barnott**

Our local economy has reached one of its healthiest marks in memory, with local unemployment near 3 percent in 2019, tourism numbers breaking records and new home construction and improvement projects surging. Our Building and Development Services Department (BADS) worked with the private sector to review and evaluate 44 subdivision plats, a 37 percent increase over the prior year. Residential building permits last year rose 3 percent and commercial permits were up by 13 percent over 2018. The Building and Development Services Department is, quite simply, busier than at any other point in history. To respond to the unprecedented customer demand, County Commissioners allocated Building Department revenues to pay for four new positions. 🏠

## AT A GLANCE: TEAM BADS

- 🏢 **28%** MORE COMMERCIAL PERMITS ISSUED OVER 2017
- 🏠 **15%** MORE RESIDENTIAL PERMITS ISSUED OVER 2017
- 👥 **29%** MORE SUBDIVISION PLATS EVALUATED OVER 2017

Under Director **John Barnott** last year team BADS continued to work in innovative new ways to avoid permitting delays. Director Barnott, along with Building Official **CJ Dupre**, worked with state officials to create a unique new process to expedite inspections reviews for air conditioner permits. Construction Review and Inspections Manager **Pat Wenzel** then coordinated with our IT team to implement the state's first video inspection process. Now air conditioning contractors can upload video of their installation projects to a secure server where Manatee County inspectors review for completeness. Video inspections has the potential to alter the landscape for many of our residential and commercial permitting processes, saving time and money for both the County and local contractors. 🏠



**Photo:** Director John Barnott presents the Floodplain Manager's Association John Ivey Award to team member Sally Cook at a Board of County Commissioners meeting.



**Photo:** Staff from BADS, IT, the County Attorney's Office and Property Appraiser's Office receive recognition for their teamwork in responding quickly to a change in Florida Statute.

## FLOOD MAP CHANGES

Manatee County residents rely on the BADS Floodplain Management group to access accurate federal data to make decisions on flood insurance. Last year Floodplain Management Manager **Sandy Tudor** organized a massive outreach campaign to educate 30,000 Manatee County homeowners about new flood zone maps being drafted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. That information is critical for anyone living near the coast or local water bodies, since shorelines have changed and so much new development has arrived over the past 30 years.

## ONLINE SERVICES

The Building Department issued an incredible 22,835 building permits and reviewed 1,152 planning applications. Much of that work was done more quickly and efficiently during our first full year of an Online Services portal that allows customers to do business with the Building Department without ever having to visit County offices. Air conditioner change out permits are Manatee County's most common permit requests. Our Building Department issued nearly 7,000 of them in 2019! 🏠

# Convention and Visitors Bureau



DIRECTOR  
**Elliott Falcione**

Our incredible environment, the sports tourism industry and the “Real Authentic Florida” feel of Manatee County continued to attract record numbers of visitors last year. An estimated 755,800 people visited Manatee County last year, up 4 percent from 2018. Those visitors made a total economic impact of more than \$1 billion last year and tourism revenues were up nearly 8 percent over 2018. Those record numbers drove new funding with which to invest in our most treasured amenities.

Last year the County Commission and Tourism Development Council approved funding for repairs to the historic Anna Maria Island City Pier which had been closed since 2017 after being damaged by Hurricane Irma. The new pier walkway and T-end deck area are expected to open in 2020.

## AT A GLANCE: TOURISM IN 2019

**755K** ANNUAL VISITORS TO MANATEE COUNTY

**\$ 15.8M** TOURISM TAX REVENUE FOR 2019

**27%** INCREASE IN TOURISM OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS

A strong tourism industry relies on strong partnerships with hoteliers, national marketing agencies, sporting leagues and other government partners. In 2018 and 2019, Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) Director **Elliott Falcione** partnered with the Sarasota Bradenton International Airport to add three new airlines, 33 new routes, and 27 new destinations. Passenger traffic has been increasing at the Sarasota Bradenton International Airport for 21 straight months. Those new destinations will generate trips from visitors from new areas, further cementing our area’s reputation as a premier tourist destination across the United States and beyond. Recent customer satisfaction surveys show that nearly 98 percent of visitors give our area high marks as a vacation destination. 94 percent of visitors plan to return. Put simply, visitors love coming to our area.



## SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Our CVB staff worked with IMG Academy to host the 2019 World’s Strongest Man competition during the summer of 2019, putting our area on display for a worldwide audience. The Strongest Man competition was one of the 105 sporting events during fiscal year 2018-19, including gymnastics, tennis, golf and rowing. In 2019 Manatee County was awarded the 2021 Under 18 World Baseball Championship. Sporting events bring competitors and their fans to our area, generating tourism and sales tax dollars that are reinvested in making Manatee County an incredible place to visit, play and call home.



**Photo:** The 42nd edition of the World’s Strongest Man Competition was held in Bradenton for the first time in 2019. The event was such a success, it will be held in Bradenton again in 2020.

## LOOKING AHEAD

2020 holds even more promise for the tourism industry in Manatee County. Over the next year we’ll see work on a new 252-room Sheraton hotel next to the Bradenton Area Convention Center. The hotel will have a resort-style pool, rooftop lounge, roughly 8,000-square-foot ballroom and other meeting space to complement our Convention Center.



**Photo:** Manatee County’s beautiful beaches attract more than 750,000 visitors from around the world each year.



*Emerson Point Preserve offers a network of hiking and kayak trails to experience a wide variety of coastal Florida wildlife and habitats.*

# County Administration



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
**Cheri Coryea**



DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
**John Osborne**



DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
**Karen Stewart**

**AT A GLANCE: COUNTY GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION**

**12** DIVERSE DEPARTMENTS

**1,900** COUNTY EMPLOYEES

**400K** COUNTY RESIDENTS

In a local government of 1,900 employees who serve 400,000 residents, change is inevitable. Change among the County's top ranks, though, is unusual. That change highlighted a year of transition unlike any other in recent history at Manatee County Government. Four of our 12 Department Directors retired or transitioned to different organizations over the past 14 months. Last December, our longtime County Administrator and Deputy County Administrator announced their retirement. Shortly thereafter, County Commissioners appointed longtime County employee **Cheri Coryea** as acting County Administrator.

County Department Directors rallied behind Cheri and the County has accomplished much despite turnover at the highest ranks. County Commissioners in May unanimously approved

Coryea as the County's first permanent female County Administrator. Longtime County planning and infrastructure expert **John Osborne** became a Deputy County Administrator and soon Cheri promoted our highly successful Economic Development Official **Karen Stewart** to be her second deputy. Within six months, our executive team had a complete makeover. From the start, Cheri made it clear that one thing would remain firmly in place: the County's longtime commitment to its ACE principles of Accountability, Civility and Ethics in the workplace.

While the ACE philosophy remains at the core of the County's daily operations, Cheri's new emphasis on Results First-based goals are changing the way employees set targets and measure benchmarks.



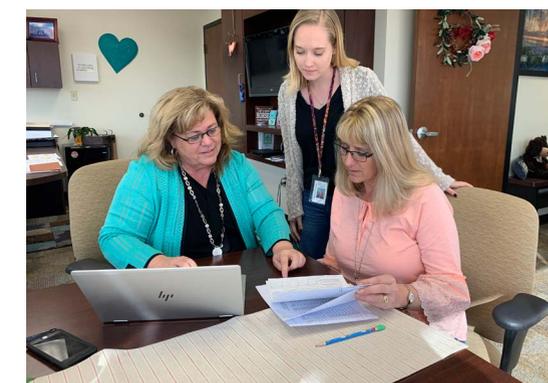
## SERVICE INVESTMENTS

One of the biggest early successes was having County Commissioners unanimously adopt a new annual budget that had the full support of our five Constitutional officers. The budget is full of Results First-based commitments. Many of the new projects and investments in the County Commission's 2020 \$1.5 billion net budget are driven by their strong potential to deliver positive results:

- Six new paramedics will complete a results-driven transition from 24-hour shifts to 12-hour shifts, improving emergency response times during peak hours.
- A new 3-1-1 call center is launching in early 2020 to replace 12 separate request lines. The new one-stop call center will resolve most citizen inquiries and requests.
- A new \$6.5 million Disaster Recovery Reserve was set aside to help rebuild our community in partnership with FEMA in the wake of a natural disaster or other community emergencies.

## COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE

The budget incorporated a new Payscale compensation software that will help us offer more competitive salaries compared to nearby public sector employers. Salaries for our lowest wage earners were increased to \$12 hourly.



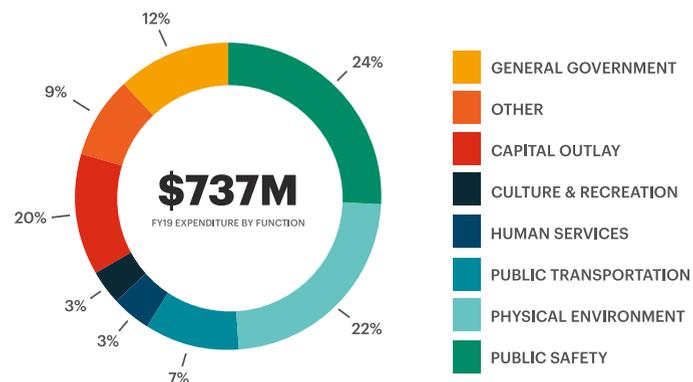
**Photo:** Manatee County's Results First Internship Program provides opportunities for college students to learn about local government and for staff to gain leadership and mentorship skills.

# Financial Management

## AT A GLANCE: 2019 ANNUAL BUDGET



DIRECTOR  
**Jan Brewer**

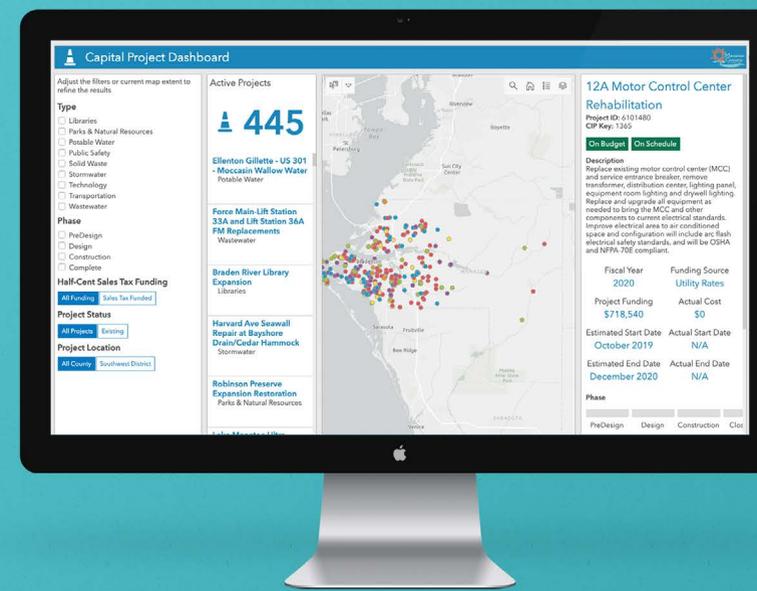


A primary responsibility of any local government is the responsible and transparent oversight of public finances. To that end, Manatee County's Financial Management Department (FMD) is second to none. In 2019 Financial Management Director **Jan Brewer** and Budget Manager **Sheila Ballesteros** worked closely with the County Administrator's Office to guide County Commissioners and the public through a months-long, zero-based budgeting process. That process culminated in September of 2018 when the Board adopted its \$737 million net balanced budget and a five-year \$1.5 billion Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

That budget continued the County Commission's longstanding commitment to public safety by adding 12 new deputies to the Sheriff's Office budget and \$225,000 for enhanced security at our

public parks. That budget also included funding to begin high profile community projects such as the Lincoln Pool, long-awaited sidewalk and drainage improvements for Rubonia and enhancements to Canal Road and Moccasin Wallow Road. 🗳️

Over the past year, FMD guided the Board in issuing \$60 million in bonds for the next phase of the 44th Avenue extension project to connect Lakewood Ranch to Bradenton. The County is able to issue debt with favorable interest rates thanks to our credit rating being upgraded to Fitch's prestigious AA+ rating for non-ad valorem debt and a comparable rating by Moody's at Aa1. Manatee County's credit ratings are among the strongest in the state.



## COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Working behind the scenes with internal departments and private sector businesses was our award-winning Procurement Division. Procurement oversees the efficient and transparent process by which the government works with the private sector to obtain goods and services. Last year our procurement team was awarded the National Procurement Institute (NPI) Award and the prestigious Florida Association of Public Procurement Officials (FAPPO) Award.



## DIGITAL TOOLS

Financial Management worked with **David Morehead** in our Property Management Department over the past year to develop a new online tool that allows taxpayers to see exactly where dollars are being spent on infrastructure throughout Manatee County. The new CIP dashboard gives residents a glimpse at local project timelines and budgets while enabling our local government to provide greater transparency to the public than ever before. Explore the Capital Improve Program interactive dashboard at [www.mymanatee.org/cip](http://www.mymanatee.org/cip). 🗨️



**Photo:** The Financial Management Department's Budget and Procurement divisions have both been nationally recognized for their excellence.

# Human Resources



DIRECTOR  
**Kim Stroud**

The 1,900 public employees who work tirelessly behind the scenes to make our government run smoothly are Manatee County Government's most valuable resource. The small team in Human Resources helps ensure our employees receive competitive wages, stellar benefits, performance recognition and health benefits that are among the best for public sector employers. Human Resources Director **Rodney Barnes** retired in 2019 and a nationwide search began to find his replacement. An extensive interview process resulted in the promotion of our longtime trusted Benefits Manager **Kim Stroud**.

Kim's track record overseeing the Employee Health Benefits division over the past nine years has resulted in a model of success, known as "Best in Class" for local governments. HR also began offering a vision insurance plan and flexible spending debit card to improve the options and convenience of our health plan.

## AT A GLANCE: COUNTY EMPLOYMENT

 **1,900** COUNTY EMPLOYEES

 **300%** INCREASE IN INTERNSHIPS OFFERED OVER PAST 3 YEARS

 **20%** OF INTERNS GAIN FULLTIME POSITIONS WITH THE COUNTY

HR partnered with Results First Internship Program Coordinator **Xavier Colon** to promote and enhance the highly successful Results First Internship Program. Interns provide great value to the County while gaining valuable work experience in their fields. We've had such success with this program over the past three years that one in five Results First interns is hired to work for us full time. The Results First program helped earn Manatee County Government the very first MVP Employer Award from the Manatee Area Chamber of Commerce. The award was given in recognition of our continued commitment to "recruiting, hiring and retaining young people in our workforce." Read more about the program at [www.mymanatee.org/RFIP](http://www.mymanatee.org/RFIP).



**Photo:** Manatee County hosts a Hiring Expo each year to promote the many career opportunities in county government.



**Photo:** More than 30 interns have participated in Manatee County's Results First Internship Program since 2017.

## INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY

During a busy year, HR Compensation Manager **Ashley Burton** helped complete and implement the findings from a comprehensive market study called Payscale for a new compensation structure that puts Manatee County on par with public sector employers around the region. HR also launched a new Spark Hire Video Interviewing platform in 2019, giving hiring managers unique new insight for job candidates and shortening the hiring process.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

HR also leveraged new technology to implement an organization-wide text communication system that allows us to communicate with employees quickly and efficiently in urgent situations. 📱

HR Manager **Julie Bassett** led the County through the transition to Aladtec technology. As a result, we're now better able to communicate with employees whenever an urgent situation arises. We can now also use the new app to schedule employee shifts when we activate for emergency management situations. 🗣️



*In 2019, Manatee County Public Works rehabilitated five local bridges and made preventative maintenance on 84 County bridges.*

# Information Technology Services



DIRECTOR  
**Paul Alexander**

If creativity and innovation are the great drivers of production in our government, technology is their enabler. While many of our 1,900 employees work outdoors repairing utility lines, keeping our beaches beautiful and educating children in our nature preserves, many others work in an office relying heavily on computers and telephones to keep our business running smoothly. Behind the scenes is our Information Technology Department, responding to 26,000 service requests over the past year.

Led by Director **Paul Alexander**, our IT department also helps protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of our internet, data storage and communication systems. Last year the department and its highly talented team established a new Payment Card Industry (PCI) Compliance Program that helps prevent security threats and cyber-attacks by monitoring, detecting, containing and eliminating threats such as viruses, phishing scams and more. The program also backs up the County's

## AT A GLANCE: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

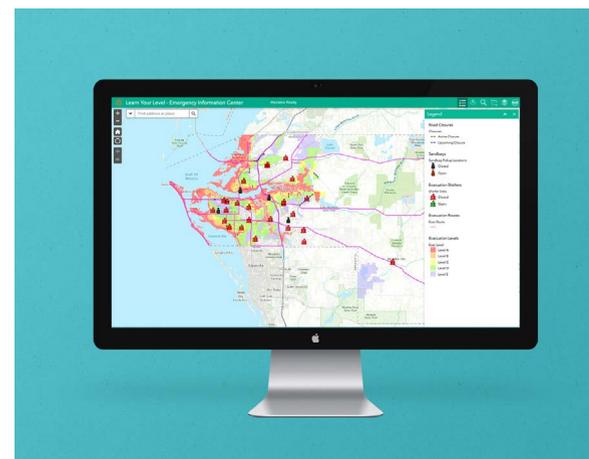
**52** LARGE SCALE ENTERPRISE PROJECTS COMPLETED

**26K** SERVICES REQUESTS AND INCIDENTS RESOLVED

**11.5M** EMAILS RECEIVED THROUGH MYMANATEE.ORG

IT systems and raises security awareness among our employees. These efforts, led by Paul and IT Senior Manager **Mike Hotaling**, help keep public sector employees safe from cyber attacks and help protect sensitive information of our bill paying customers and others who work with the County. 🇺

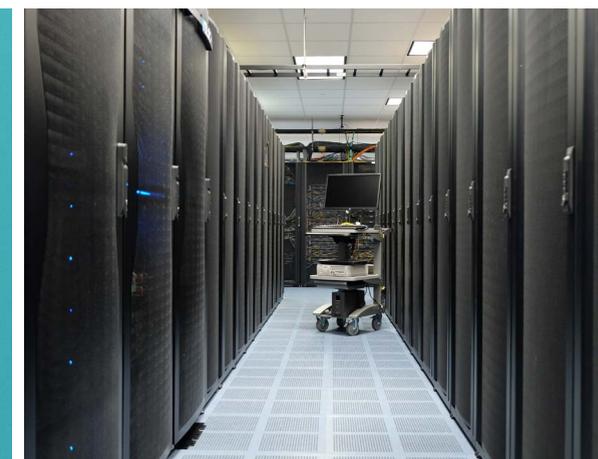
Outside the secure server rooms and Customer Service call centers that assist our employees, IT also has been busy over the past year bolstering the communications network for first responders in Manatee and Sarasota counties. The P25 radio project, led by IT Manager **Willie Miranda**, is replacing several aging radio towers and added three new towers to enhance radio coverage in hard-to-communicate locations. When complete in early 2020 the new P25 radio network will give police, paramedics, firefighters and other first responders a far more reliable way to communicate during emergencies each day.



**Photo:** Try out the new Learn Your Level Tool at [mymanatee.org/emergencyinfo](http://mymanatee.org/emergencyinfo)

### NEW RESOURCES

The Learn Your Level - Emergency Information Center application is an interactive map that allows you to easily find your evacuation level, evacuation routes, and view the location and status of the County's sandbag distribution sites and emergency shelters. A new Road Closures application is an interactive map with current and upcoming road closures around the county. It also offers information about the reason for the closure, the expected duration and suggested detours. So many people were involved in these projects, but some of the most notable were **Rachael Taft, Jeff Pace** and **Mike Olmstead**. 🇺



**Photo:** Inside a data center located at the Manatee County Public Safety Center.

### ONE CALL RESOLUTION

IT Project Manager **Art Stadlin** has spent much of the past year overseeing the complex transition of our Citizens Action Center from the downtown Administration Building to the Emergency Communications Center inside the Public Safety Center. The new 3-1-1 call center will give our residents one-call resolution, and consolidate more than a dozen County info lines into one easy-to-remember number for help from the County. 🗨

# Neighborhood Services



DIRECTOR  
**Ava Ehde**

When Manatee County residents have life- or property-threatening emergencies, they call 9-1-1. When our residents have less urgent needs, their first line of help with Manatee County is often our Neighborhood Services Department. Led by new Director **Ava Ehde**, this department oversees critical County service areas dedicated to seniors, children, veterans and government funding for local health care providers serving the uninsured.

Our Neighborhood Services Administration division is a small team of superstars led by **Debbie Deleon** who link our messages and services directly to residents through their neighborhood and homeowner associations. The division played a key role in completing Neighborhood Action Plans (NAP) for the Parrish Village and Washington Park neighborhoods, identifying the needs and priorities of each community, along with plans to implement residents' priorities over time.

## AT A GLANCE: NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

**13,000** VETERANS SERVED IN 2019

**760K** PEOPLE VISITED MANATEE LIBRARIES

**12** NEIGHBORHOOD ENHANCEMENT GRANTS AWARDED

In 2019 Neighborhood Services led the community outreach on our Back to the Future initiative, presenting at dozens of local meetings to get citizen input for how our government will respond to a fast-growing community. That effort was led by **Simone Peterson**, editor of the County's popular Neighborhood Connections magazine. 🗨️

## HELPING FAMILIES

Human Services Manager **Susan Ford** led our Children's Services Advisory Board (CSAB) in responding to a crisis in child adoption dissolutions by funding a multi-agency program that served 96 parents, 165 adopted children and 28 siblings over the past three years with no failed adoptions. Susan put years of grant management experience into overseeing the new BlackBaud software and grants-in-aid process. Our new method rewards agencies that demonstrate evidence-based outcomes rather than simply providing their traditional programming. 🙏



**Photo:** Literacy programs funded by CSAB and partner organizations led to a 3% reduction over the past year in the number of children who cannot read.



**Photo:** Our proud Veterans Services division of four employees helped nearly 13,000 veterans obtain the benefits they earned in service to our community last year.

## SERVING MANATEE

Our stellar Public Library System staff helped improve child literacy rates last year by opening a LITtle Discovery Center with games, toys and books for families with small children. Our Libraries staff also helped the Suncoast for Grade-Level Reading Campaign initiative by participating in the Soar in 4 program that offers STEAM activities and collaborating with local partners on the summer Dive Into Reading project.

Under the strong management of Health Care Services Manager **Joshua Barnett**, the County's costs per patient have been reduced on consecutive

years thanks to improved data collection and patient access to medical care. Joshua and his team have leveraged state and federal dollars to curtail uncompensated care for safety net hospitals while working on solutions to reduce the need for acute behavioral health care in Manatee County.

Manatee County Probation Services Manager **Jennifer Burgh** and her team implemented a new DETER program that helps first time DUI defendants stay out of jail by performing service in our Offender Work Program. The Offender Work Program again helped keep non-violent offenders out of jail and reduced the number of County staff to keep up with a larger caseload.

# Parks and Natural Resources



DIRECTOR  
**Charlie Hunsicker**

Manatee County's parks and conservation lands are some of our most incredible local resources and people travel here from across the state to experience their beauty. Those public assets are overseen by a phenomenal Parks and Natural Resources Department, a wide-ranging group that not only keeps our public beaches and natural preserves clean, they also educate the public on the importance of conservation and horticulture, monitor local waterways for pollutants and operate our athletic fields for local sports leagues.

The centerpiece of our public parks system is G.T. Bray Park and Recreation Center where new fitness workshops became regular classes for the Group Fitness Schedule in 2019. Among many other popular offerings was a new "Walk with a Doctor" event where local groups walk along the G.T. Bray Park trail with a local physician who answers questions and provides health tips at no cost.

## AT A GLANCE: PARKS AND RESOURCES

 **30K** ACRES OF PRESERVATION

 **\$22M** AWARDS IN BEACH RESTORATION GRANTS

 **14K** CITRUS ACRES IN MANATEE

Another of Parks' chief responsibilities is ensuring the beaches of Anna Maria Island are replenished with clean, fresh sand whenever they're eroded by tides and storms. To that end, Parks Director **Charlie Hunsicker** and his team helped obtain \$19 million in state and federal funds for the reconstruction of our beaches. Manatee County obtained another \$3.3 million in FEMA funds to repair damages from Hurricanes Hermine and Irma. 🏠

## GRANTS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Our Parks Department is also overseeing the County's investment of RESTORE Act funds that are invested in restoring the long-term health of the valuable natural ecosystem and economy of the Gulf Coast region. Last year Parks applied \$620,309 toward a coastal watershed program to improve water quality in Manatee County by developing a watershed management plan.



**Photo:** Students from the University of Missouri joined Manatee County for four days of volunteering at different preserves, bagging oyster shell, cleaning beaches and pulling invasive plants.

That plan will lay out improvements needed for 14 areas of the county which were developed under old flood and drainage standards. 🏠

Another \$225,000 in RESTORE funds was invested in the Florida Maritime Museum that preserves the maritime heritage of Cortez Village. Parks is also investing \$100,000 in RESTORE funds with the Gulf Shellfish Institute's Sea Farm to Table program by applying research to improve predictability of growth and harvesting of shellfish.



**Photo:** Our Ecological and Marine Resources team designs, monitors and supervises ecological restoration in Robinson, Perico, Hidden Harbor and Duette preserves.

## PLANNING FOR SEA LEVEL RISE

The Environmental Protection Division (EPD), under the leadership of **Rob Brown**, is leading Manatee County's response to sea level rise. Throughout 2019 Rob and his team worked with the Tampa Bay Resiliency Coalition to develop a Regional Resiliency Action Plan to update regional sea level rise projections. Local governments throughout the Bay area will use that data to plan for future capital projects and to provide vulnerability analyses. 🏠



*Manatee County is home to nearly 700 farms and more than 230,000 acres in production agriculture, ranking the county 7th in Florida for agriculture sales.*



# Property Management



DIRECTOR  
**Charlie Bishop**

Manatee County's Property Management Department is another group of talented behind-the-scenes employees that make us proud of our public facilities. The team at Property Management not only acquires and maintains County buildings, they're also responsible for much of our new construction of public facilities. They play a critical role in the projects being built with the voter-approved Half Cent sales tax for infrastructure. And few individuals could have kept those projects moving as quickly and efficiently as Director **Charlie Bishop**. Here's just a handful of the high-visibility projects Property Management had the lead role in completing:

- ✓ Blackstone Park received new dugouts, an upgraded skate park and a concession stand with restrooms at both the soccer and softball fields.
- ✓ New lifeguard towers are now being installed at our public beaches, one of the most needed public safety projects from our Infrastructure Sales Tax.

## AT A GLANCE: PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

 **20** PARKS AND PRESERVES 360° MAPPED TRAILS

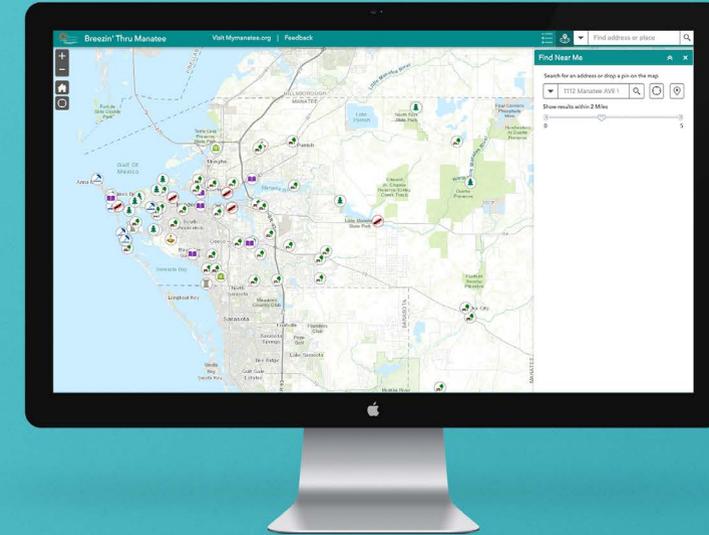
 **51** PARKS MAINTAINED

 **12** MILES OF TRAILS MAINTAINED

- ✓ G.T. Bray Park, Manatee County's most popular public park, received a renovated skate park along with new lighting on its football and practice soccer fields. Bray's dog park also expanded and was renamed in honor of longtime pet advocate Laurie Crawford.

- ✓ After County Commissioners approved the purchase of a former Red Cross facility in Lakewood Ranch, Property Management began renovation to convert the building into a 24-hour EMS facility to improve response times in one of our fastest growing population centers.

- ✓ The County's popular Downtown Cat Town was relocated to a more spacious building one mile east. The new adoption facility is a new, larger home with indoor and outdoor areas for adoptable cats and kittens to walk. 🐾



**Photo:** Manatee County celebrated the opening of the new and improved G.T. Bray Skate Park with free helmet fittings for all ages.



**Photo:** The Laurie Crawford Dog Park was one of the first projects funded by the Half-Cent Sales Tax to be completed.

## INSPIRING PARTNERSHIPS

Charlie and Parks Operations Manager **Carmine DeMilio** were at the center of one of our most inspiring successes of 2019. Together they helped forge a unique partnership with local non-profits to put unemployed adults to work with County jobs. Under the program, the County hires disabled/disadvantaged adults to fill high-turnover positions.

Property Management worked with Turning Points and the Easter Seals to employ adults in keeping our beaches and parks clean throughout the week. Florida Department of Economic Opportunity designated Carmine as a Florida Unique Abilities Partner in 2019.

## INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

No less inspiring was the story of Property Management GIS Analyst **Lea Harper** organizing a countywide supply drive for victims of Hurricane Dorian. In a span of two weeks, Lea organized the supply drive that resulted in 10 pallets of clothes, tools, food and other sorely needed supplies being delivered to impacted residents of the Bahamas. Lea is also responsible for our popular new Breezin' Through Manatee app ([www.mymanatee.org/explore](http://www.mymanatee.org/explore)) that allows visitors to explore outdoor parks, preserves and other outdoor amenities across Manatee County. 🌴

# Public Safety



DIRECTOR  
**JACOB SAUR**

Manatee County Public Safety Department has long been recognized as our front-line heroes who are first to respond to our residents in an emergency. The past year was one of substantial change for Public Safety, but the department's stellar reputation continued to shine in Manatee County. Each of the department's five divisions achieved considerable success thanks to a cohesive group of division chiefs who represent us well.

The largest group within Public Safety was also the division that succeeded in spite of significant changes at the highest levels of the department. In April, Director **Bob Smith** announced his departure and the leadership role was quickly transferred to Public Safety veteran **Jake Saur**. Jake's longevity with the County and his background as an EMT and later as chief of our Emergency Communications Center gave him a unique perspective on the department's day-to-day operations.

Public Safety also streamlined its ability to provide pre-hospital care by merging the Community Paramedicine Division into Emergency Medical Services, creating a team that encompasses

## AT A GLANCE: MANATEE COUNTY'S PUBLIC SAFETY TEAM

 **7.1** MINUTES AVG. EMS RESPONSE TIME

 **220K** EMERGENCY 911 CALLS IN 2019

 **1,200** MCAS PETS ADOPTED

lifesaving emergency care with additional patient oversight and treatment. With the merger, **James Crutchfield** was named the new Chief of EMS, a result of his strong leadership as Community Paramedicine Chief in prior years.

**Steve Litschauer** was promoted as the new Emergency Management Chief overseeing a team tasked with disaster preparedness and response in an ever-changing climate. Chief Litschauer showed great leadership during preparations for Hurricane Dorian and his small, can-do division was busy the remainder of the year raising community awareness on the importance of storm preparation. Emergency Management also added Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training to its list of offerings to the community in 2019. 🗣️

## PROTECTING OUR PETS

Animal Services Chief **Sarah Brown** has brought calm, steady leadership to one of the most prominent areas of our Public Safety Department, Manatee County Animal Services (MCAS). Last year MCAS worked with volunteers and partner agencies



throughout the year to meet the Board's stated goal of a 95 percent save rate for healthy, adoptable animals and achieved "No Kill" shelter status for the second year in a row. MCAS's fifth annual Adopt-a-Palooza attracted a record 3,000 people to the area's largest adoption event. The highlight of the year for MCAS was the decision by County Commissioners to approve funding for a new animal shelter to replace our aging, overpopulated facility in Palmetto.

## STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATIONS

Our Emergency Communications Center (ECC) was the first in the nation to implement two cloud-based CAD systems, continuing to be a national leader on

Next Generation 9-1-1 service that is transforming the method and speed with which we can respond to residents in need. ECC installed a product known as Rapid SOS, enabling our call takers to track the precise location of cell phone callers to within two meters. Interim ECC Chief **Stacy Needham** has worked hard over the past six months to ready the Communications Center to welcome our new 3-1-1 call center launching in 2020. 🗣️

# Public Works



DIRECTOR  
**Chad Butzow**

From the roads and bridges we travel on to the stormwater systems that help rainwater recede more quickly, maybe no other County department is at the forefront of a growing community's needs than our Public Works team. And though local roads are most important to many County residents, it's our major thoroughfares that receive the most attention because they carry the most traffic.

Over the past year Director **Chad Butzow** led Manatee County Public Works on the continued design and construction of the 44th Avenue Extension Project that will connect Lakewood Ranch and east Manatee to west Bradenton. Our professional Public Works traffic engineers completed the design for a critical new bridge for 44th Avenue that will soon cross the Braden River. Public Works also completed the 45th Street East link connecting 44th to State Road 70, marking a significant link between two major east-west corridors.

The same traffic engineers began design work on significant roadway improvements in north

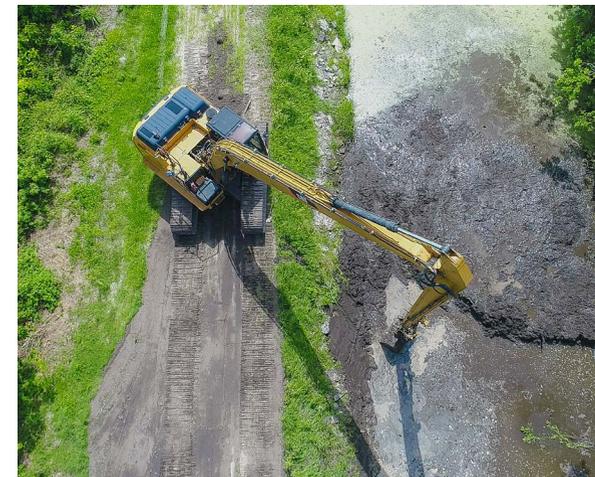
## AT A GLANCE: MANATEE COUNTY'S TRANSPORTATION

-  **1.4M** MCAT BUS PASSENGERS IN 2019
-  **75K** ANNA MARIA ISLAND TROLLEY PASSENGERS
-  **400** SMART TRAFFIC CENTER CAMERAS

Manatee County, including the expansion of Moccasin Wallow Road from U.S. 41 to Interstate 75; the widening of Canal Road from U.S. 301 to U.S. 41; and improvements to 60th Avenue East from U.S. 301 to Mendoza Road. Public Works also installed improvements along 121st Avenue East to accommodate new traffic from the Parrish Community High School. At the forefront of these efforts to create transportation solutions in our fastest growing areas are Public Works Deputy Directors **Sia Mollanazar** and **Clarke Davis**.

### STORMWATER IMPROVEMENTS

Chad Butzow also led County Commissioners through many months of workshops detailing our stormwater utility system. By the summer, Commissioners agreed that improvements are needed to the stormwater utility in order to address local flooding and water quality issues. By the fall, we embarked on a public outreach campaign to educate Manatee County residents on the importance of the stormwater utility and the need to upgrade it. 🗨️

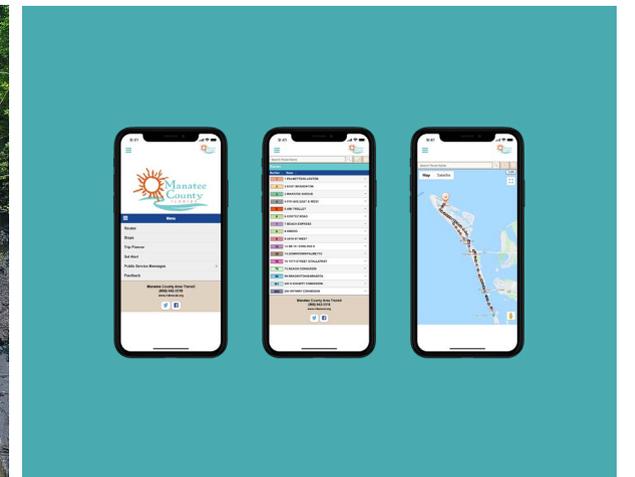


**Photo:** Manatee County Public Works checked 7,875 inlets and cleaned more than 28 miles of ditches as part of its stormwater management efforts in 2019.

County Commissioners will look at how to fund those improvements over the next 18 months, but short-term enhancements are coming more quickly. To that end, our Public Works team in 2019 also began a substantial stormwater improvement and parking lot expansion at Coquina Beach, our most popular public beach.

### NEW TRANSIT TECHNOLOGY

Our Manatee County Area Transit division delivered more than 1.4 million passengers to their destinations last year, many of whom used new mobile applications to make their ride easier. MCAT's new mobile ticketing program allows



**Photo:** MCAT's new myStop Mobile app allows passengers to see the real-time locations and arrival times of MCAT buses.

passengers to buy a bus pass from their cell phones and other wireless devices. The new free myStop Mobile app shows passengers exactly where their bus is in route to their bus stop. These great advancements are the result of innovators like MCAT Manager **William Steele** and **Ryan Suarez**, our MCAT Planning Section Manager. 📱



*Port Manatee adds more than \$2.3 billion dollars annually in regional economic impact.*

# Redevelopment and Economic Opportunity



DIRECTOR  
**Geri Lopez**

With low unemployment rates, booming home sales and record-breaking tourism numbers, Manatee County's economy is barreling into 2020. Helping to make sure investors know about the boundless opportunities in all areas of the County is our Redevelopment and Economic Opportunity (REO) Department. Now in its third year, REO has taken the lead role in attracting new business opportunities in our Southwest District.

REO Director **Geri Lopez** and **Karen Stewart**, the County's Economic Development official and its newest Deputy County Administrator, worked closely on a new five-year Southwest District Strategic Plan that paves the way for Commissioners to invest in some of our oldest areas with a \$14.7 million budget for FY20 and over \$26 million in projected revenues over the next five years. REO also led the County's effort to complete the Northwest County Plan that outlines recommendations for attracting businesses to the area around Port Manatee. ↗

## AT A GLANCE: COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

**\$33M** CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN THE SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

**884** NEW AFFORDABLE RENTALS IN THE AREA

**563** QUALITY JOBS CREATED THROUGH HIRING INCENTIVES

Geri worked with Community Development Manager **Denise Thomas** to apply the new Livable Manatee incentives to create affordable single-family homes. Under the new program, Commissioners funded nearly \$300,000 in impact fees for 20 houses that are now homes to very low, low- and moderate-income families. REO also played a role in the 884 affordable rental units and another 72 single-family homes now in the development pipeline.

## BOOSTING OUR ECONOMY

Karen Stewart worked with eight new and existing businesses to obtain County Commissioners approval for economic incentive grants that will result in 563 new quality jobs here over time. Those jobs will pay an average wage of \$65,549 and result in \$32.9 million in capital investment over the next five years, all right here in Manatee County.



**Photo:** The County's economic incentive grants are expected to bring 563 new quality jobs to the area.



**Photo:** County Commissioners created the Southwest District in 2014 to encourage redevelopment in aging areas.

## INCLUSIVE MANATEE

Karen also led the Board in amending its economic incentive package to include the new Inclusive Manatee Initiative aimed at providing new opportunities for disadvantaged residents. A pilot project in Samoset helps connect unemployed residents to jobs, aiming to lower neighborhood unemployment and increase median income by 2022. A separate addition to the Board's Economic Development Incentive package provides a local hiring bonus and payment for transportation impact fees and facility investment fees for companies that expand jobs and invest in capital improvements.



# Utilities



DIRECTOR  
**Mike Gore**

Water quality issues and potential environmental impacts permeated the news in 2019. Manatee County Utilities Department prides itself on taking a proactive role in the treatment of local water, and in 2019 finalized projects to enhance water quality and to reduce chemical and nutrient contribution to surface water bodies under the strong leadership of Director **Mike Gore**.

Utilities Deputy Director **Mark Simpson** oversaw the creation of a new biological treatment facility that uses biological organisms to treat surface water before any chemical treatment takes place. This innovative new ultrafiltration process reduces the amount of chemicals necessary to bring the surface water to drinking quality standards. **C**

Deputy Director **Jeff Goodwin** improved our wastewater treatment process to reduce the amount of wastewater that's disposed of during the wet weather season. Additional disposal capabilities – storage – of treated wastewater were brought online during the year, greatly reducing the need to discharge nutrient-laden water into surface water bodies. These process improvements are long-term solutions to improve local water quality that should give residents confidence that Manatee County takes water quality seriously.

## AT A GLANCE: MANATEE COUNTY'S UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

**355M** GALLONS OF DRINKING WATER DAILY

**162M** GALLONS OF RECLAIMED WATER DAILY

**348K** TONS OF TRASH PROCESSED IN 2019

## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Manatee County Utilities also took steps to protect bill-paying customers in 2019 by rolling out new enhanced security measures for online transactions. Our Utilities team worked with IT to ensure that all policies and procedures were in strict compliance with Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard. This ensures the very best protection of our customers' information. **U**

While those changes were done behind the scenes, updates to the website and additional payment options were put in place for the customers to enjoy a more user-friendly experience in dealing with Manatee County Utilities. These are just a few examples of how the utility department strives to continually enhance the customer's experience.

## SUSTAINABILITY

The Utilities leadership group continued to evaluate our water and wastewater infrastructure and to plan for 2020 and beyond. Their findings confirmed that the overall condition of our utility is good. The Utilities team will continue to work on regular maintenance, repair and upgrades.



AWARDS

# Awards and Recognition



### Employee of the Year

We were thrilled to announce our 2019 Employee of the Year as Theresa Wunderlich, the custodian at our Public Safety Center. Coworkers describe Theresa as a cheerful and happy employee who spreads positivity to anyone she comes in contact with. She is hard working, conscientious and good hearted, attributes that come across to anyone who meets her.

### Manatee Young Professional, Individual MVP Award

Neighborhoods Specialist Simone Peterson for her role as a leader of our Manatee Millennial Movement



**Government Finance Officers Association, Distinguished Budget Presentation Award**  
Manatee County Financial Management Department



**John Ivey Award for Excellence**  
Floodplain Coordinator Sally Cook - Building and Development Services



**16th Congressional District Fire and Rescue and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Awards, Unit Citation Award**  
Manatee County Department of Public Safety's Ambulance Strike Team 601 comprised of Mark Regis, Richard Johnson, Erwin Evelyne, William Cheek, Nick Horvath, Beth Harmount, Earl Kulpa, Dominick Reale, and Justin Woods for response to Hurricane Michael



**Manatee Young Professionals, Most Valuable Player Employer Award**  
Manatee County Government in recognition of our continued commitment to "recruiting, hiring and retaining young people in our workforce"



**Intelligent Transportation Society of Florida Outstanding Achievement Award**  
Sarasota-Manatee SMART TRAFFIC traveler information website team  
[www.smarttrafficinfo.org](http://www.smarttrafficinfo.org)



**Government Fleet magazine, Leading Fleet**  
Manatee County Fleet Services - Team Fleet was again recognized among the nation's top fleet crews by Government Fleet magazine. MCAT drivers recently won several awards at the 2019 Florida Triple Crown Bus Rodeo.



**Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, Future of the Region Award for Preparedness & Resiliency**  
Rapid Activation Patient Treatment Or Rehab (RAPTOR) bus, which helps EMS relocate patients in times of evacuation and on-scene rehabilitation of firefighters at large incident scenes.

# 2019 County Administrator Awards



### County Administrator's Award for Excellence

MIKE GORE - UTILITIES

The County Administrator's Award for Excellence goes to the employee who has demonstrated extraordinary, consistent leadership in guiding a department or group to Results/Success and who demonstrates an unwavering commitment to Accountability, Civility and Ethics.



### Manatee County Innovator of the Year Award

DAVID MOREHEAD - PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

The Manatee County Innovator of the Year Award is presented to the individual or team that has offered game-changing ideas, improved processes, added substantial value or convenience to the public or to the County's operations.



### Results First Award

MATT CASE - PUBLIC WORKS

The Results First Award goes to the employee/team who has done the most to advance the County Administrator's vision for a results-based workplace that rewards high achievements and specific outcomes.



### Unsung Heroes Award

CYBER-SECURITY TEAM - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Unsung Heroes Award is given to the individual or group of employees who helps Manatee County Government achieve success without making headlines. This honor recognizes behind-the-scenes work or projects that have improved the County in a substantial way over the past year.



## ACE Coin

*The ACE coin is bestowed by the leaders of the Manatee County Government on employees who exemplify our organization's dedication to Accountability, Civility and Ethics (ACE). These qualities are the foundation for a principled workforce committed to excellence.*

### PREVIOUS WINNERS

- Suzie Dobbs
- Beverly Chiotti
- Barbara Carter
- Paula Pesmark
- Charlie Hunsicker
- David Thompson
- Karen Windon
- Alan Lai Hipp
- CJ Dupre
- Ron Koper, Jr.
- Vishal Kakkad
- Eva Brown
- Barbara Redmond
- Charlie Bishop
- Bill Hutchison
- Eva Galler
- Art Stadlin
- Cheri Coryea
- Simone Peterson
- Ron Schulhofer
- Ebony Livingston
- Debbie Deleon
- Carmine DeMilio

### 2019 WINNERS

- Kim Stroud
- Renee Isrel
- Maggie Daniell
- Ed Hunzeker
- Dan Schlandt
- Diane Vollmer
- Nicholas De La Rosa
- Kevin Sheerin
- Vince Bland

AWARDS

Award / Recognition	Recipient(s)	Department
Pride Performance Incentive Award - Back to the Future Project	Xavier Colon, Jeff Ryan, Simone Peterson, Ogden Clark, Chelsea Baker, Deidra Greene-Larkins	Neighborhood Services
Pride Performance Incentive Award - Pilot Landscape Project	Craig Johnson, Jay Aldrich, Roger Waldron, Thomas Januszka, Kevin Wicks, Jesus Maldonado, Sandro Serna, Carmine DeMilio	Property Management
Pride Performance Incentive Award - Card/Door Access Project	Alex Rico	Property Management
Pride Performance Incentive Award - Above and Beyond in Absence of Manager	Jennifer Lewis	Utilities
Employee of the Month - January	James Lee	Utilities
Employee of the Month - February	Theresa Wunderlich	Property Management
Employee of the Month - March	Ryan Suarez	Public Works
Employee of the Month - April	Theresa Kersey	Public Safety
Employee of the Month - May	Lea Harper	Property Management
Employee of the Month - June	John Howard	Building and Development Services
Employee of the Month - July	Mark Regis	Public Safety
Employee of the Month - August	Debbie Deleon	Neighborhood Services
Employee of the Month - September	Rodney Hyde	Utilities
Employee of the Month - October	Lorrie See	Neighborhood Services
Employee of the Month - November	Rachael Taft	County Administration

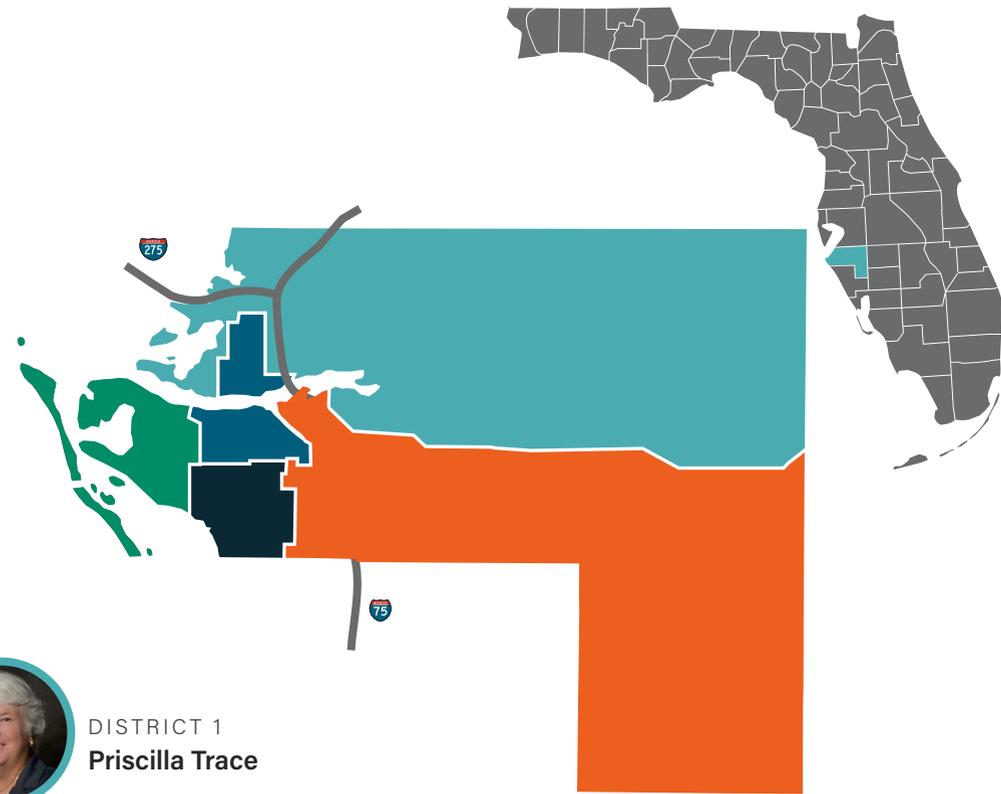
Award / Recognition	Recipient(s)	Department
Heroism Award	Sandra Clay	Property Management
Heroism Award	Hjalmar Pachas	Property Management
Team Award (Assistance with 12th Judicial Circuit Court Needs/Events)	Mike Owens, Jeff Wilson, Mike Buttke, Melinda Orrill, Rick Bapst	Property Management
Team Award (Senate Bill 248 Project)	Jeff Pace, Priscilla Thoopthong, Ian McNair, Lacy Pritchard, Katie Pearson, Sanford Zapata, Wadnerson Boileau, Mindy Carver, Paul Hrebenach, Justin Lunde, Victor Mandes, Chris Solan, Bill Clague	Building and Development Services, Information Technology Services
Outstanding Educational Materials: Website, Apps & Educational Technology, 1st Place UF/IFAS Extension and FANREP	Angela Collins	Parks and Natural Resources
Search for Excellence in 4-H Programming Regional Winner National Association of County Agricultural Agents	Christa Kirby	Parks and Natural Resources
Summer Internship UF/IFAS Extension	Crystal Snodgrass	Parks and Natural Resources
Long Publication on Scrub Habitat Plant Identification, 1st Place Florida Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals (FANREP)	Lisa Hickey	Parks and Natural Resources
Landscaping Image Award Keep Manatee Beautiful	Mack Lessig	Parks and Natural Resources
Future of the Regions Award Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council	Michelle Atkinson	Parks and Natural Resources
Innovation in Programming Team Award, 1st Place Florida Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences	Nelly Nelson	Parks and Natural Resources



*The 40-foot tall observation tower at Robinson Preserve provides a view of four counties and five bodies of water.*

# Manatee County Commissioners

The Board of County Commissioners is comprised of seven members. Five members are elected from single-member districts, and two are elected county-wide. Each district commissioner must reside in the district for which he or she seeks election.



DISTRICT 1  
**Priscilla Trace**



DISTRICT 2  
**Reggie Bellamy**



DISTRICT 4  
**Misty Servia**



AT LARGE  
**Carol Whitmore**



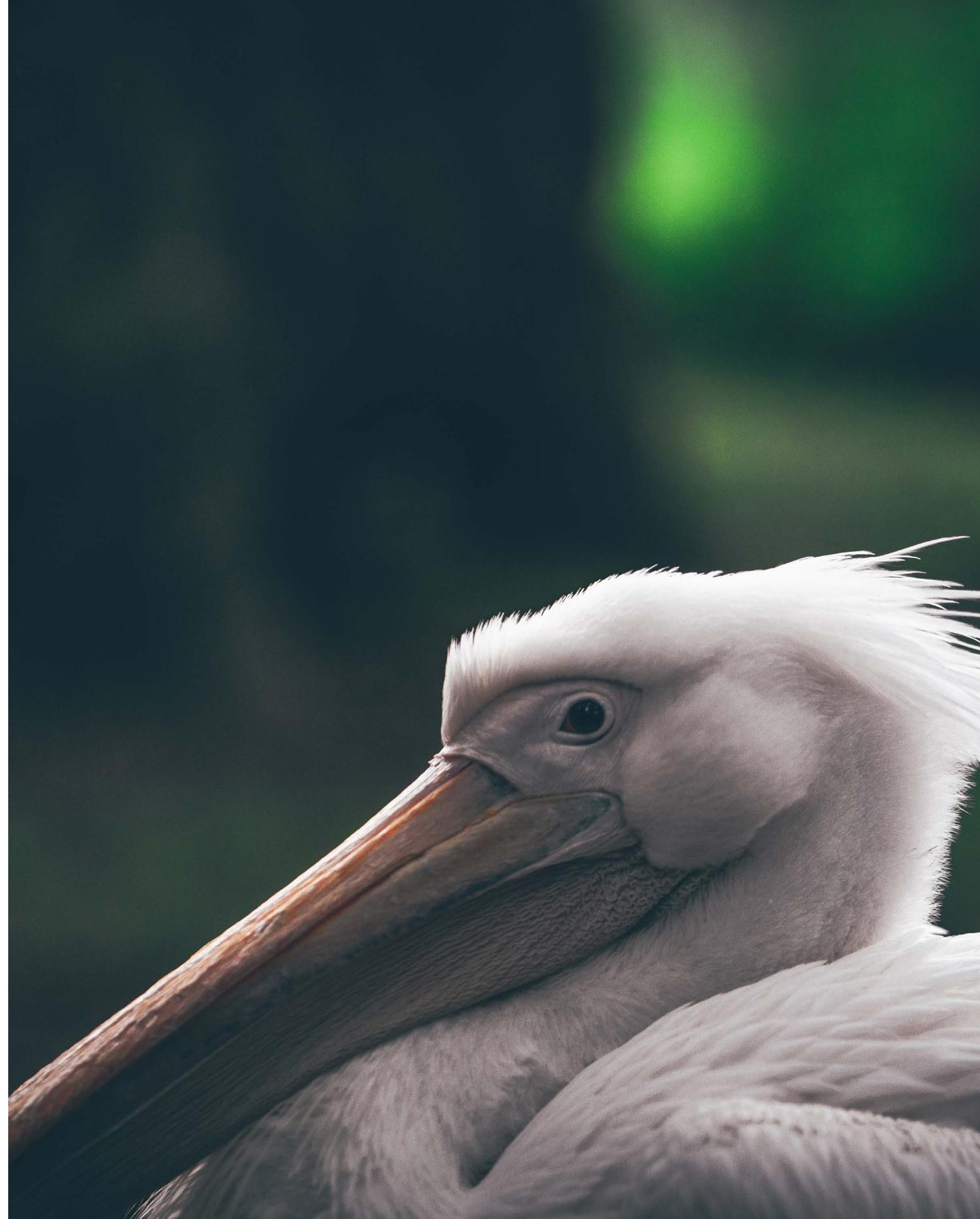
DISTRICT 3  
**Stephen Jonsson**



DISTRICT 5  
**Vanessa Baugh**



AT LARGE  
**Betsy Benac**





## CONTACT US

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