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The Bulletin

The POA – Champions of Residents' Rights Since 1975

FEBRUARY 2019

POA4US.org

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UPCOMING POA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019 • 7 P.M.

Eisenhower Recreation Center
Voyage Autonomus
Self-Driving Cars

Tuesday, Mar. 19, 2019 • 7 P.M.

Laurel Manor

**Don Henderson, President & CEO
of The Villages Regional Hospital
Update on Improvements at TVRH**

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Customer Service and Transparency Priorities for District Manager and Staff

With 125,000 residents and 55 square miles of infrastructure and facilities totaling \$2 Billion, District Manager Richard Baier told a full house at the January POA General Membership Meeting that he has reorganized District departments to accommodate growth and streamline customer transactions. Mr. Baier said The Villages will soon approach 65-70 square miles, and is already larger than 96% of municipalities in Florida, ranking 17th of 412 communities.

A longtime government official working in such premiere communities as Alexandria, VA and Clearwater, FL, Mr. Baier said he has always prided himself on openness and brings that standard to The Villages District government. Little things, such as pictures of all District Board Supervisors, help residents connect and know who is representing them. His focus in the restructuring of departments has been Enhanced Communication, Transparency, Enhanced



Customer Service and Systems & Analytical Decision Making, all with one goal in mind: "How can we (District government) serve you better?" For example, most meetings and activities occur at the Lake Sumter Landing offices, which are not always the most convenient to the most residents. They are exploring more online resources and additional office locations to address this need.

The annual operating budget for the District is \$350 Million, and Mr. Baier believes residents should expect the best fiscal management systems available. In November, the Villages Center Community Development District (VCCDD) and the North Sumter County Development District approved a significant

District Manager continued on page 2

The Property Owners’ Association, Inc. (POA) is the original property owners’ group in The Villages. Established in 1975, the POA operates with complete independence from the Developer of The Villages. Membership is open to all property owners and residents of The Villages. The POA is committed to acting as a watchdog to ensure that the Developer and local government are responsive to the needs, interests, and rights of residents.

The POA Declaration of Independence

The POA is free of any outside influence. This is the only way we can assure our members of absolute autonomy to act on their behalf. From the very beginning in 1975, we recognized this need for independence, and we’ve cherished and nurtured it ever since.

Vision The Property Owners’ Association, Inc. (POA) is a champion for the rights of residents of The Villages. Guided by member input, investigation and determination, the POA brings attention to and acts on issues that may impact property values and quality of life.

Mission Statement The POA provides 1) a forum for discussion of issues; 2) research and analysis; 3) programs of interest; and, 4) is a conduit for objective and accurate information. Specific attention is given to resolving housing, community and local government issues.

Values

- Independence • Honesty • Fairness
- Objectivity • Respect



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District Manager continued from page 1

investment in new GIS (Geographic Information System) based asset management and financial management technology platforms (see article on page 15) that will interface with each other and other local units of government to achieve efficiencies and create synergy.

Mr. Baier identified several pressures that the District is dealing with, including growth, governance, resources, resident connectivity, complexity of resources and change itself. With respect to governance, he said there are 16 individual Community Development Districts, and suggested it may be time again to explore collapsing these units into a more manageable number.

The District is also managing resources differently, such as “right sizing” fleet vehicles – 160 of them – by leasing more fuel-efficient vehicles. Working more cooperatively with other adjacent units of local government on the operation of traffic signals, streetlights and GIS systems can amount to significant efficiencies.

Among the initiatives underway are:

- Master Plan for Communication – allowing such things as taking a picture of an issue and sending it to District staff for action,
- Strategic Planning and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) Analysis
- Procurement
- Employee On-Boarding for new employees,
- Increased Inter-Local Governmental Synergy

Significant capital projects on the drawing board include a wood shop to be located behind the fire station across from Eisenhower Recreation Center, Paradise Recreation Center options, CR 42 Church Property development, Parr Drive Fire Station and CR 468 Fire Station.

District Manager continued on page 3

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District Manager continued from page 2

Questions & Answers

Q Street signs are dangerous due to the lack of visibility. What is being done to address this issue?

Except for CDD 4, the county unit of government is responsible for the maintenance and visibility of street signs. Sumter County is in the process of implementing an \$800,000 street sign replacement program with larger signage. They are currently in the areas of CDDs 5 and 6, and are working southward. If there is an immediate issue with a sign, the associated county should be contacted. Sumter County 352-689-4400; Marion County 352-438-2300; Lake County 352-343-9888. The District is responsible for the roads in CDD 4, Fruitland Park maintains CDD 11, and Wildwood takes care of CDD12.

Q What is the status of repairs to the sinkhole area in Calumet Grove?

Mr. Baier said this is an example of “bad things happening to good people,” and the situation is complicated by insurance issues, local (county) government zoning and codes, and property ownership. CDD 4 has spent more than \$200,000 on safety, pumping, legal fees, and remediation. Mr. Baier said it will likely be another 6-9 months before it is resolved.

District Manager continued on page 3



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Project Wide Advisory Committee Debates Aquatic Chair Lifts At Swimming Pools

Are aquatic chair lifts a “lifestyle asset” that should be provided at every pool or is the \$10,000 per lift an expense that should be phased in or on a “by request” only basis? Those are the questions the Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC) is contemplating in light of the \$340,000 price tag estimated for the 34 pools south of CR 466 that don’t yet have lifts.

The discussion began at the January meeting, and PWAC members will decide at the March meeting from the following three options:

1. Include request for lifts at the remaining 34 pools in the FY 19-20 Budget;
2. Approve a FY 18-19 Budget Resolution to provide funding in the current fiscal year; or
3. The installation costs can be budgeted in phases over multiple years.

Currently, PWAC’s policy has been to phase in three lifts per year on an “as requested” basis. Budget Director Barbara Kays said there are available funds in working capital to install all of the 34 lifts this year. The annual maintenance cost for each lift is about \$500.

Committee member Jerry Vicenti questioned whether there is a need to install them all at once and whether they should be installed in pools close in proximity. Other committee members think there could be a cost savings by doing them all at once, and there is no way to define a “level of effort” for someone who has to travel a farther distance to get to a pool that has a lift when their own neighborhood pool does not.



A memo provided by Ms. Kays to District Manager Richard Baier said that the District is in compliance with ADA regulations, and the code did not change until March 2010. A resident asked the Committee to remember that the ADA requirements are intended to serve a limited number of people, so looking at need versus cost may not be an accurate measure.

CDD 8 Board of Supervisors Member Dwayne Johnson asked the Committee to wait until its March meeting to make a decision to give the CDDs time to get resident input. Mr. Baier reminded the Committee that the expenditure of Sumter Landing Amenity Division (SLAD) funds is not under the purview of the CDDs.

What do you think should be done about these aquatic chair lifts? Every CDD south of CR 466 has a member of its Board appointed to serve on PWAC. Contact your committee member and give them your thoughts. Below is a list. If you don’t know what District you live in, you can find it on your Villages ID or you can call the District Customer Service Department at 352-753-4508.

Chair Lifts continued on page 5

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Chair Lifts continued from page 4

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Jerry Knoll (District 5) Alternate	jerry.knoll@districtgov.org	352-391-5002
Peter Moeller (District 6) Primary	peter.moeller@districtgov.org	352-751-4117
Tom Griffith (District 6) Alternate	tom.griffith@districtgov.org	305-215-0235
Jerry Vicenti (District 7) Primary	jerry.vicenti@districtgov.org	908-705-1857
Dennis Broedlin (District 7) Alternate	dennis.broedlin@districtgov.org	203-394-8780
Dennis Hayes (District 8) Primary	dennis.hayes@districtgov.org	352-633-0750
Phil Walker (District 8) Alternate	phil.walker@districtgov.org	352-753-8618
Steve Brown (District 9) Primary	steve.brown@districtgov.org	352-633-6073
Dave Green (District 9) Alternate	dave.green@districtgov.org	813-334-7488
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Patty Hoxie (District 11) Primary	patty.hoxie@districtgov.org	847-707-2360
Allen Vanover (District 11) Alternate	allen.vanover@districtgov.org	352-750-0386

NOTE. The Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) had a similar discussion at its Capital Budget Workshop held on January 23. See page 6 for the action the AAC took. ■

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AAC Debates Capital Projects At January Workshop

Members of the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) and District staff met in a workshop in January to discuss big-ticket capital projects at the CR 42 Baptist Church property and Paradise Recreation Center. They also reached consensus on adding aquatic lift chairs to the remaining eight pools that don’t currently have them, and had a lengthy debate about how to fix issues at the Del Mar gate at Avenida Avenue in Spanish Springs. The meeting was a workshop, so no official action was taken on any items, but discussion led to consensus and direction for staff. Any items requiring formal action will be voted on in a regular monthly AAC meeting.

Financial Overview. Budget Director Barbara Kays first provided a 10-year forecast of the fund balance for amenity revenues and operating expenses. Projections, which Ms. Kays emphasized are only a planning tool based on a set of assumptions, indicate that the fund balance will fall below revenue slightly in the Fiscal Years (FY) 24/25 and 25/26, even out in FY 26/27 because of a temporary reduction in debt service, and spike significantly in FY 27/28. Ms. Kays cautioned the AAC not to wait to begin discussions about solutions to the upcoming deficits. Because of the current, relatively low number of rooftops north of CR 466 that are below the \$155 current Amenity Fee Deferral Rate, one slide showed that over the 10-year period, there is upwards of \$21 Million in Deferral Rate revenue that the AAC is not receiving.

The Capital Improvement Project budget does not include the new capital projects at the church property or Mulberry, but is based on the current, updated Capital Improvement Plan for existing recreation centers and golf courses.

There will be approximately \$12 Million in settlement funds after the final payment and reconciliation in December 2020, based on currently allocated projects and funds.

The settlement funds have been paid annually since the 2008 POA-backed lawsuit that resulted in a \$40 Million settlement and

created the AAC, which has authority over the settlement funds, the Recreation Amenity Fund, and setting the Amenity Fee Deferral Rate.

Villages of Marion (formerly First Baptist Church). The District acquired the former First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in September 2018 for a purchase price of \$2 million that includes an existing 9,200 square foot building and 19.28 acres. The AAC directed staff to receive input from residents and Resident Lifestyle Volunteer Groups for internal and external recreation center features, such as meeting space, storage, restrooms, facility enhancements, type of pool and other considerations for the property. Input from residents will be gathered by District staff, compiled and submitted to the AAC for future direction and feedback at the April 10, 2019 meeting.

District Property Management Assistant Director Blair Bean told committee members that inspections of the church fellowship hall indicate the building is in very good condition, both structurally and mechanically. Three options to develop the property were presented and discussed. All options include:

- Installation of outdoor amenities consistent with a comparable recreation center,
- Site work improvements,
- Recreation and Building Furniture, Fixture, Equipment (FFE),
- Landscape/Irrigation, and,
- Permitting, Design, Project Management, Contingency

Option 1: Building renovation with no addition to the under-roof area of the existing building (9200 square feet); 21 months to complete; \$4.5 Million - \$5.2 Million Estimated Cost;

Option 2: Building renovation with additional 6,000 square feet under roof to accommodate potential proposed uses (15,200 square feet); 21 months to complete; \$5.2 Million - \$6.5 Million Estimated Cost;

Option 3: Building demolition and reconstruction of facility (9,200- 15,200 square feet); 26 months to complete; \$5.6 Million - \$7.5 Million Estimated Cost.

Committee member Carl Bell supported Option 3, stating that The Villages always does things “first-class,” and said this project should also reflect that. Chair Ann Forrester favored Option 1, stating that the initial need requested by residents was unique, outdoor programming. Mr. Bean said that the staff recommendation is to utilize the existing building since it is in such good condition.

The committee agreed that until the resident input comes back and there can be programming options presented, it would take Option 3 off the table, and directed staff to use \$6.5 Million as a “placeholder” budget.

Paradise Recreation Center. The Paradise Regional Recreation Center was built in 1984, and a portion was renovated and remodeled in 2005. The existing facility is 37, 500 square feet which includes a 6,300 square feet block and bar joist building that was added in 2005. At the April 2018 Budget Workshop, the AAC authorized staff to investigate options available for retrofitting the existing Paradise Regional Recreation Center.

Capital Projects continued on page 7

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Capital Projects continued from page 6



Two options were presented for consideration. All options include:

- Demolition and construction of pool, shuffleboard relocation,
- Site work improvements,
- Recreation and Building Furniture, Fixture, Equipment (FFE),
- Landscape/Irrigation, and,
- Permitting, Design, Project Management, Contingency

Option 1: Retain 6,300 square feet of existing block and bar joist building, complete facelift and connect to the new construction; total square feet under roof 37,500; includes potential three (3) foot elevation difference between new building and retained structure; 30 months to complete; \$14.5 - 15.75 million Estimated Cost.

Option 2: Demolition and reconstruction of the entire existing facility; total square feet under roof 37,500; 30 months to complete; \$15.75 Million - \$17 Million Estimated Cost.

AAC members agreed that The Villages of Marion and the Paradise projects cannot be considered at the same time. District Manager Richard Baier said that doing the Marion project first will provide options to “swing” people from Paradise over for programming that will be unavailable at Paradise during construction. The Committee agreed and suggested looking at Paradise again after the Marion project is well underway.

Aquatic Chair Lifts. Committee members reached consensus very quickly that the 8 remaining pools that do not have lifts should have them installed in this fiscal year.

Del Mar Gate. In 2015, the AAC staff and the District’s engineer were directed to evaluate traffic operations at the Del Mar gate. At the May 2016 AAC Budget Workshop direction was received to staff the Del Mar gate during peak hours and continue to evaluate the conditions. At the November 2018 AAC meeting, staff was given direction to perform additional operational tests at the Del Mar Gate in light of recurring concerns. Del Mar became a staffed gate in November 2015 as a short-term solution to enable a traffic count to be completed; it was NOT a staffed gate prior to that time. When events were scheduled in the Town Square, a special detail attendant or the area Patrol Driver would staff the location to

Capital Projects continued on page 8

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Capital Projects continued from page 7

assist users through in a safe and timely manner.

Community Watch Division Chief Nehemiah Wolfe reviewed recent operational tests and said that the Del Mar gate has 20% more traffic and 7 times the number of gate strikes as the El Cortez gate. It also has significantly more complaints than other gates.

Several residents, many with visual impairments, spoke at the meeting, expressing concerns about non-vehicular traffic. They depend on gate attendants to assist them, and urged the Committee to consider these special needs.

Part of the issue with the gate, according to District Manager Baier, is that the adjacent streets, including the easements, are owned by the City of Lady Lake, and the District cannot expend funds or build on another municipality's property.

Operational Tests:

- Gate Attendant remains at Gatehouse door to greet users and provide assistance when necessary. Users continue to key scan or press the red button to enter. (current protocol)
- Gate Attendant remains at Gatehouse door to greet users and provide assistance when necessary. Gate Attendant opens gate for every user. User is directed to park behind gatehouse if they need assistance so traffic does not back up into intersection.
- Gate Attendant remains at Gatehouse door to greet users and provide assistance when necessary. Gate in construction mode and automatically opens on approach. User is directed to park behind gatehouse if they need assistance so traffic does not back up into intersection.

Staff Considerations & Recommendations:

Design Upgrade: An upgrade to the design at the location would involve adding a VISITOR LANE, thus allowing the gate to operate as other staffed gate locations. The attendant would use the hand held stop sign, greet the users from the gate house doorway and open the gate arm for vehicles.

Unstaffed Gate Location: Remove the gate attendant staff from the Del Mar gate modifying

operations used at numerous unstaffed gate locations within the District that require the user to use their gate card or press the red button to activate/open the gate arm.

Staff recommends proceeding with the installation of a second ingress lane at the Del Mar Gate.

Chief Wolfe said that operational testing concluded that the vehicle capacity through the gate was increased in construction mode. He said an additional lane increases the through put at this location, increasing efficiency at the intersection of Del Mar and Avenida Central. This work is subject to approval from the Town of Lady Lake.

Capital Projects continued on page 9

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Capital Projects continued from page 8

After lengthy discussion, three members of the Committee said they would support the staff recommendations. The estimated cost of the proposal is \$71,920 and will be voted on at the February AAC meeting. The work would not begin until after the peak traffic season.

The February meeting of the AAC to take official action on the items discussed will be Wednesday, February 6, at 9 AM at the Savannah Center. ■

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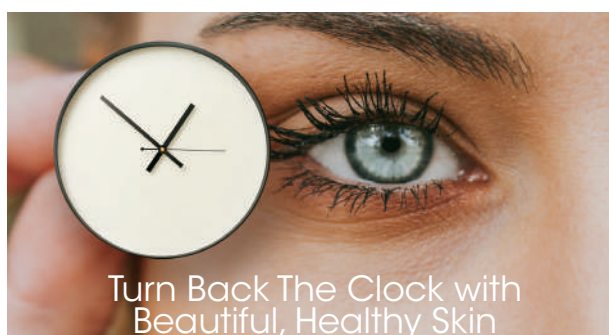
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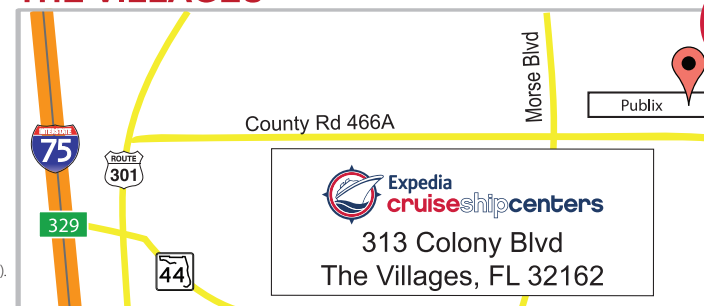
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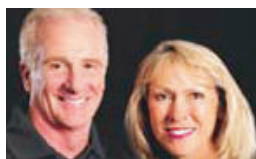
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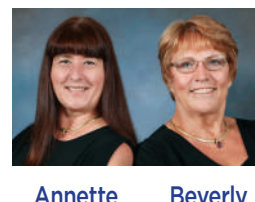
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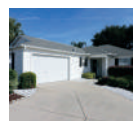
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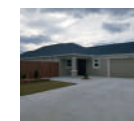
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In Case You Missed It...News Highlights from January Meetings

Architectural Review Changes Proposed

During the September 2018 meetings, District staff advised Boards that a review was taking place regarding improvement of the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) process. One review included evaluating what is a “substantial change” and researching what revisions could be made to the Manual to eliminate certain minor modifications. The following are proposed major revisions. Community Standards Manager Candace Dennis requested the various boards provide feedback so that the changes can be approved at February meetings.

Section 2.5 Driveways, Walkways, Patios, Front Entry Flooring

Courtyard Villa:

- Eliminates the requirement for ARC approval for driveway painting/coatings that has an approved petition by the ARC.
- Eliminates the requirement for ARC approval for driveway pavers that has an approved petition by the ARC.

Section 2.9 Front Doors

Courtyard Villa:

- Eliminates approval for front door modifications. ARC approval is required if said modification is to increase the height or width of the door.

Section 2.10 Garage Doors/Screens

Courtyard Villa:

- Eliminates approval for garage door or garage screen modifications. Exterior painting and modifications to the height or width of the garage door require ARC approval.

Section 2.12 Lights – Outdoor

Home, Courtyard Villa, Patio Villa:

- Eliminates this section as this would be a deed compliance issue.

Section 2.16 Tree Removal

Home:

- Defined that palms are not considered a tree for purposes of this regulation. ARC will not review applications for palm removal.

Everything You Wanted to Know (or Didn't!) About Wastewater in The Villages

Have you ever wondered how much waste 125,000 people can create every year or what happens to it when you flush, wash or shower? The District's Advanced Wastewater Treatment Workshops held in January provided residents with information that should help answer any questions or concerns about wastewater treatment.

Here are some stats to help get your thoughts “flowing.” Villagers produce 2.1 Billion gallons of wastewater each year; 98% is treated and reused for irrigation. More than 9,500 tons of biosolids are generated and used as soil amendment. There are 525 miles of wastewater collection lines, 128 lift stations, and operations and management of more than \$1 Billion at three District treatment plants (and one private.)

Wow, waste is a big money operation!

The intricate treatment process begins when you flush and the wastewater is taken to a pumping station that sends it directly to the treatment plant or to another part of the collection system. There, it goes through a series of processes and comes out the other end (sorry!) and is reused on The Villages approximate 3,620 golf course acres and 150 acres along roads. It is not used for residential irrigation.

This water cycle is designed with environmental stewardship and the future in mind in urban

areas. You can find the full presentation, along with Q & A from the break-out sessions on districtgov.org, scroll down on the home page until you come to Wastewater Treatment Workshop.

AAC and PWAC Announce Special Meetings

The Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) and Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC) have announced special meetings in February and March.

On February 28 from 6 – 8 PM at Rohan Recreation Center, PWAC will hold a special informational meeting for residents that will include a presentation about PWAC's duties and responsibilities and a Question and Answer session.

On March 20 at 9 AM at the Savannah Center, the AAC and PWAC will hold a joint session to discuss the Amenity Deferral Rate. This discussion will not pertain to setting the Amenity Prevalent Rate, which is set by the Developer. However, budget projections will be provided to allow both committees to discuss together how and whether the Deferral Rate may be increased in the future. ■

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\$1.5 Million Software Upgrades to Provide Efficiency and Asset Management

The District has invested \$1.5 Million – approved in November by the Village Center Community Development District – for software that will manage the District's \$2 Billion asset systems, provide the second phase of the Financial Management Software that includes Financial, Budget and Procurement, and Document Management Software, Hardware and Services. Brittany Wilson, Director of Technology and Board Support Services explained the benefits of these new technology platforms to the Amenity Authority Committee and Community Development District Boards of Supervisors at their January meetings.

Asset Management. The District currently has asset management related data stored in multiple, disconnected databases and file cabinets with a heavy reliance on MS Excel to consolidate and bring data together. Ms. Wilson said that the new software will allow for resident engagement, Geographic Information System (GIS) Capital Improvement Project projecting and planning, up-to-date maintenance & repair history, establish and streamline workflows, and schedule preventative maintenance. For example, residents will be able to identify an "issue" with a picture that can be found via the GIS mapping system, and staff will be able to connect all of the work history with the stroke of a key, instead of having to search through multiple documents and screens.

The initial focus is on the water/wastewater utility infrastructure that services residents in Marion, Lake and Sumter Counties. Jacobs, the engineering firm that provides wastewater treatment services is already using the software and implementation services will be accomplished via a task order amendment to the existing contract.

Future focus will include all district assets including, but not limited to, facilities, landscaping, irrigation, utilities, gates, bridges, storm pipes, golf courses, fire stations, water retention areas, parks, preserves, villa roads, and work order management.

Sumter County currently maintains and supports GIS data for municipalities in the county.

An Interlocal Agreement with Sumter County will benefit the VCCDD with hosting and

developing GIS content in Sumter County. GIS data developed outside of Sumter County will be performed based on task orders.

Financial Management Modules.

Among the benefits of the financial management systems is the elimination of manual processes and standalone systems, increased productivity, efficiency, and accuracy, enabling paperless processes with electronic approvals, and increased capabilities for long term forecasting. Efficiencies will be realized with the elimination of manual journal entries – up to 150 per month – with a single electronic entry that is replicated on a monthly basis and electronic approval; purchase orders that can be generated and routed electronically for approval, with software that will encumber the funds so the system can track the available funds automatically; and multi-year budgeting that enables electronic departmental budget creation & review, allows easy access to historical data when budgeting, and provides departments with tools to query budgets vs. actual.

Document Management. The District has identified a new version of imaging software known as Laserfiche Avante that allows greater integration with the existing and proposed financial management software modules. Intelligent scanning software with built in optical character recognition (OCR) capabilities, is a true workflow system that is highly customizable to meet organizational needs, and has a web based interface for ease of management.

According to District Manager Richard Baier, this significant investment in each of these

platforms will provide real cost savings over current methods, consolidate and increase efficiencies of software, improve risk aversion/ risk management, and provides improved work flow and work environment to staff. ■



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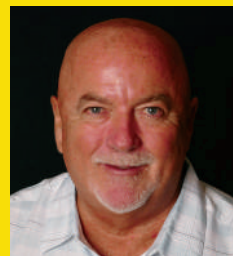
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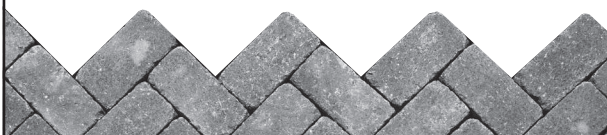
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District Manager continued from page 3

Q Since the Parr Drive fire station has to be expanded to accommodate a new ladder truck needed for the Elan Senior Living Center (a for-profit entity), will the same be needed for the multi-story hotel and medical center in Brownwood? Why should residents have to pay for facilities that are only needed to accommodate these for-profit businesses?

Fire Districts are set up on a regional coverage basis, and not on an individual building basis. Just as residents can't choose to pay less for amenity fees because they don't participate in everything available, neither can they choose not to pay for other capital improvements.

Fire ISO ratings (Insurance Services Office) are very specific and among the standards is response time. Mr. Baier said that since The Villages is growing South and Southeast, it is likely there will be more fire stations, some that the District Public Safety will run and others that will be run by other units of government. He said they have a "closest unit response" agreement with Sumter County.

Q Is the District's Strategic Planning process open to residents and will there be any "green" efforts?

There will be a roll out of the process to all the District boards and residents. Environmental initiatives are included such as fleet efficiency, recycling, repurposing water, and software platforms that will reduce using paper.

Q What will happen 20 years from now when the demographics are different – including the next generation who are not golfers – and there are different interests? Will the golf courses and other facilities not be needed and sit idle?

The golf courses exist first, as an integral part of the stormwater management system and second, as a recreation amenity. The purpose of strategic planning is to look at SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) to provide better direction for the future. Mr. Baier noted the changes the Developer is making when constructing new areas and said the District must also keep an eye on those indicators.

Q Many governmental agencies experience fraud, theft and abuse. What is the District doing to protect against these issues?

Having good access to data, staying on top of the data and having the ability to analyze the data in real time is the basis for protection. Every CDD also has an annual financial audit.

Q How are police keeping up with traffic control?

The District doesn't provide traffic control; it is handled by the counties and cities. If there are issues in a specific area, they can set up an enforcement area.

Q Who has authority over postal stations?

The District takes care of the building and grounds, but not the postal boxes.

Q Who does the District Manager report to?

The District Manager is hired by the Villages Center Community Development District (VCCDD), and also reports to every other CDD through a management contract. "I have 87 bosses!" Mr. Baier said. ■



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CPR/AED Community Emergency Alert Program

The POA has launched a new partnership with the Villages Public Safety Department (VPSD) to proliferate the neighborhood automatic external defibrillator (AED) program. Our Villages' AED program is one of the best in class lifesaving initiatives that has exceeded the cardiac arrest national survival rate by multiple times. This AED initiative currently covers some 25% of all homes in America's Friendliest Hometown leaving much room to expand. The POA has created a neighborhood presentation to encourage non-participating areas to get involved in getting their units underway. Neighborhood coordinators are needed to initiate and shepherd the effort to become an AED community. The presentation answers the questions of necessity, how it works, and recurring and non-recurring costs associated with the program. **Presentations are available for your neighborhood by calling Cliff Weiner, 352-418-7372 or Sal Tornante, 352-350-2218.**



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You do not have to be a POA member (but we wish you would; it's only \$10/year) to sign up for email delivery since *The Bulletin* is available for delivery to every household in The Villages.

We are working out the details but want to start getting our email list compiled. Please fill out the form at right or send an email to thebulletin@poa4us.com with the same information, or mail the form below to POA, 8736 SE 165th Lane, PMB 111, The Villages, FL 32162.

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Gardening Spot

Ready, Set, PRUNE!

by Anne Lambrecht Fanatical Gardener mrsanne04@gmail.com

“Pruning is the selective removal of plant parts, typically shoots and branches, to improve health, control growth or enhance fruiting, flowering or appearance.”* All growing things need air, light, water and care. The mere mention of pruning strikes a chord of dread in many of us. But fear not: with a little education and sharp, clean tools, pruning your shrubbery can be fun and even therapeutic. Pruning should always be a part of your gardening routine. I carry a pair of clean, sharpened pruners in my pocket when I garden.

Why prune? Choosing the right plant can eliminate much of the pruning requirements in today's landscapes. Unfortunately for many of us, our landscapes have been planted with shrubs that we like the looks of and then installed according to their current size and shape, not the size the plant is going to be in five years. Then it's necessary to prune frequently to keep it within bounds or move the plant completely. So, unless you've done your homework beforehand, pruning your shrubbery can be a real headache. Proper pruning is an art and an important landscape management practice. Making the right cuts in the right places to get the plant to be healthy and pretty is the art form.

What to prune. Prune almost any plant or shrub to remove dead, diseased, crossed, rubbing or broken branches.

When to prune. Valentine's Day is the day when your roses should be pruned. Take at least one-third of the bush down and clear out crossing, dead or weak looking branches. By the time the rose regenerates new growth, it'll be spring and the chance for a freeze will be over.

Trees and shrubs can be lightly pruned anytime. Spring flowering plants such as azaleas, spireas, some hydrangea, camellia, Indian hawthorn and dogwoods should be pruned in late spring, after flowering but before the flower buds set for the next season. They can be pruned at other times with the result being less flowers the next year.

Plants that produce flowers on current season's growth such as allamanda, hibiscus, oleander, plumbago, thyralis, golden dew drop, bougainvillea, roses and bottle brush, cassia, and crape myrtle are usually pruned while dormant or just before the spring growth flush. For us that flush is March-April-May, depending on the plant. Although extremely therapeutic, I have decided not to prune my crape myrtles this year. The flowers on the ones that I don't trim are just as nice as the pruned ones. Think of the time saved for other gardening!

When plants such as amaryllis or agapanthus (lily of the Nile) are finished blooming, cut the scape (the stalk). The rule of thumb is: prune after flowering. If the plant never stops flowering, go ahead and prune anytime for shape, to thin it out, give it light and to clean it up. Don't be afraid to cut.

Prune trees such as oaks, maples, hickory and other large shade trees during the dormant season or just following a growth flush. You see the landscapers trimming the live oaks on our medians in January. It is always good to know a good certified arborist.

Do not prune palms until the weather warms up.

How to prune. The key on how to prune is knowing where on the branch and the angle of the cut. Make a 45 degree cut at least ¼ inch right above the “bud” or “node” (the place from which

the new growth will come out). Too close to the bud might damage or weaken it, too far from the bud would stunt it. Too slanted to the bud might damage the branch and too close to the bud might cause the bud to fall off.

Do not prune when you transplant. Your plant is already stressed. Wait a few weeks until the roots have taken hold and then trim.

A great practice is each time you use your clippers, loppers and hedge shears, clean your tools using a mild bleach solution to get rid of fungus and any invisible disease you may pick up while working. Dry the tools, and oil with a household oil. Sharpen with a file or scissor cutter.

My Garden Buddy's shrubs could use a good deal of pruning. But he will say that perhaps mine do too, especially when my guests need a machete to get to the front door!

So get on out there and get some pruning therapy!

**Pruning Landscape Trees and Shrubs by Edward F. Gilman and Robert J. Black University of Florida Circular 853 <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mgo87>* ■

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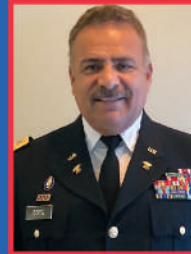
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Seniors vs. Crime

Avoiding Real Estate Transaction Scams

Due to several major email compromises and other security breaches exposing individual email accounts, scams related to email compromise, in which crooks try to trick firms and individuals into redirecting payments to scammers' own bank accounts, have rocketed by as much as 2200% in the past couple of years.

According to new figures from the Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), there were more than 78,000 incidents between October 2013 and the middle of 2018, costing firms and individuals over \$12.5 billion. But the last two years have been far and away the worst.

Most of the money ends up in China or Hong Kong, although the scammers' locations also include the UK, Mexico, and Turkey. Overall, fraudulent account deposit transfer scams have also been tracked (but not traced) to 115 countries.

One of the crooks' main targets is the real estate sector, including buyers, sellers, title companies, law firms, and real estate agents. Crimes in this category have soared eleven-fold in just the past couple of years and the value of losses has gone up twenty-two-fold.

Do Villagers buy and sell homes a lot? You bet they do! Some Villagers are on their third or fourth home IN THE VILLAGES as they try to find that perfect retirement home in this near-perfect community. Others are looking to buy rental properties to supplement their retirement income. Whatever the reason, The Villages is a very active real estate market.

"Victims most often report a spoofed email being sent or received on behalf of one of these real estate transaction participants with instructions directing the recipient to change the payment type and/or payment location to a fraudulent account," IC3 explains.

The recipient, in this case, is often a home buyer or their representative, who is asked in one of these fake emails to wire their money -- whether it's a down payment, 'Ernest' money, or the entire cost of the house -- to what seems to be a title or escrow company.

"The funds are usually directed to a fraudulent domestic account which quickly disperses (the deposit) through cash or check withdrawals," IC3 adds. "The funds may also be transferred to a secondary fraudulent domestic or international account. Funds sent to domestic accounts are often depleted rapidly, making recovery difficult."

Worse still, the scammers are now also roping innocent individuals into helping them commit these crimes. They use these individuals as "money mules" -- people who believe they're working for legitimate businesses in receiving and transferring the stolen money abroad.

IC3 says the best defense is to always verify all requests for a change in payment arrangements and to double-check if you are asked to wire a payment instead of sending a check. Many title companies have already started doing this.

Whether you're an individual or small business, you should always be wary of email-only communications. Any request to transfer money should always be double-checked with the real intended recipient.

"Be mindful of phone conversations," IC3 adds. "Victims have reported receiving phone calls (from scammers) requesting personal information for verification purposes."

"Some victims report they were unable to distinguish the fraudulent phone conversation from legitimate conversations. One way to counteract this fraudulent activity is to establish code phrases that would only be known to the two legitimate parties."

If you fall victim to one of these crimes, acting quickly is crucial.

First, you should contact your bank or other financial institution that you drew the money from and ask for a recall of funds. Second, get in touch with law enforcement and tell them about the fraud. They may be able to work with your bank or lender to get the money back. Third, file a complaint with IC3 (www.ic3.gov). They also will work with the bank and law enforcement to try to get your money back.

If you need assistance with understanding any aspects of Fake Check Scams, contact your nearest Seniors vs. Crime office in The Villages for advice or assistance. Seniors vs. Crime can be reached at:

The Fruitland Park Police Department Annex in the Moyer Recreation Center in The Villages – (352) 674-1882

The Marion County Sheriff's Office in The Villages – (352) 753-7775

The Sumter County Sheriff's Office in The Villages – (352) 689-4600, Extension 4606

The Wildwood Police Department Annex at Brownwood in The Villages – (352) 750-1914

Volunteers at all four offices are ready, willing and able to assist you. To keep up with the latest scams, LIKE 'Seniors vs. Crime Region 4' on Facebook. Hablamos Español. Por favor pregunte por Yolanda. Martes a Viernes: 10:00 A.M. a 2:00 P.M., (352) 689-4606. ■

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Captain Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger was an experienced aviator: a former Air Force F-4 'Phantom' pilot who wrestled military aircraft when engine "flame-outs" happened. Years of training prepared this hero to exhibit unnerving skill when the ultimate situation demanded. With his team of co-pilot and crew, Sully ensured that every passenger would walk (not swim) away from death's door.

Certainly the aircraft on that day was well designed and maintained. But that "bird" did not make the difference: rather, it was the combined knowledge of those professionals strapped within that fuselage. Radiation cancer care truly differs from the portrayal of a treatment machine somehow transformed into a life-saving "craft" whose performance and price tag cause spell-bound viewers to expect something magical to happen: it won't!

Put decisions for care where they count. Let's compare "flight crews" and experience. **The Robert Boissoneault Oncology Institute** (RBOI) has four Villages radiation oncologists whose total expertise approaches 150 years, a nurse practitioner with almost 20 years, three PhD physicists where local competition has none, and 12 physics staff personnel. RBOI continues to hold American College of Radiology accreditation, the most respected recognition awarded a comprehensive cancer center. Since Moffitt's departure, we are now the only radiation facility on The Villages campus with such accreditation...an honor we have attained for over 22 years.

This is your life. Sound medical decisions are only found when you interact with physicians. With that in mind, bring this article to our office, and be scheduled to meet with one of our physicians for a second opinion...without cost.



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