

Communication from Lynne Matthews, Mayor  
Punta Gorda City Council District 4

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The calm before the storm.  
Photo provided by C.A. Barbour.

**Here is your Weekly Highlights Report for November 1, 2024.**  
For the complete report from the City, click [HERE](#).

**Hurricane Milton damage - City parks and Harborwalk closures:** The City of Punta Gorda has announced that, due to substantial damage caused by Hurricane Milton, the Harborwalk is now closed to the public. In addition to the Harborwalk, several key recreational areas will remain closed until further notice:

- \* Ponce de Leon Park
- \* Gilchrist Park
- \* Hounds on Henry Dog Park
- \* All fishing piers are also closed
- \* All boardwalks

City officials are assessing the damage and are committed to ensuring the safety of all residents and visitors. We appreciate the community's understanding and patience during this time as recovery efforts are underway.

**Hurricane Milton updates** - For the latest updates on hurricane recovery efforts, safety information, and important resources, please click [HERE](#).

**Daylight saving time** - The end to daylight saving time is just around the corner, meaning

clocks in most parts of the U.S. will "fall back" one hour on November 3. Going back to standard time may be a big adjustment for many. It will get darker earlier in the evening and it is known to disrupt your body's natural day to night rhythm. Some studies show it increases sleep disruption, heart issues and more. So please take good care of yourself and adjust your own body to the change to minimize the change.



**Welcome back to some of our local restaurants and businesses who have recovered from the hurricanes!** This is only a partial list, so apologies if your business is not included: Fishermen's Village, FM Don's, Leroy's, Isabel & Anabel's, Ortigia, Carmelo's, Perfect Caper, Celtic Ray, TT's Tiki Hut, Toulas, Pizza Gorda, Burg'r Bar, Ice House, Los Mariachi's, Tamiami Tavern, Laishley Crab House, Military Heritage Museum. I know there are many others, but these are the ones who have reached out to me. I hope all our residents will help support these wonderful businesses and help get them all back on their feet.

**City Council meeting** - City Council will meet at 9 a.m. on November 6 at Military Heritage Museum, 900 W. Marion Avenue. Items of interest include:

- \* Ordinance of the City of Punta Gorda, Florida amending Chapter 20a, Punta Gorda Code
- \* Hurricane update - Sanitation trucks
- \* Christmas tree

**City Manager** - The major focus of the City continues to be hurricane recovery. The debris hauler is removing debris seven days a week. A dashboard for monitoring debris pick-up is available by clicking [HERE](#).

As of Wednesday haulers had picked up 6,599 cubic yards of construction and demolition debris. The one time pickup of commercial debris in the downtown area will occur over the dates of November 2 and November 3. A flyer was delivered to the 97 businesses last weekend.

Our Building Division continued the evaluation of structures impacted by the hurricanes. To date, we have 1,571 buildings that have been reported as damaged. Four were destroyed, 81 with major damage, 707 with minor damage, and 779 with affected buildings.



A special Helene/Milton storm damage permit application is available on the City's website. Hover over Government, click on Building, and then click on Building Forms. The top form is the Helene/Milton application. The items must be filled out, and the questions in the middle of the page for adding, extending, or deleting electric, plumbing, or mechanical are answered as no. If the answer is yes to any of those, it is no longer a repair but an alteration/remodel, and the regular building application and process will need to be followed. If the application is completely filled and the answer is no, as stated above, we

hope to turn these permits around in 24 to 48 hours. At the application's top is an email address to send the form, but paper copies are also accepted.

Temporary housing (Recreational vehicles) for living quarters while storm repairs are being made are permitted case-by-case through a Temporary Conditional Use permit application process. Only occupants of the damaged home may reside in the temporary RV's. In addition, separate permits may be required through the Building Division if the temporary housing unit is connected to water, sewer, and electricity. For information, click [HERE](#).

City staff is working to open portions of Gilchrist Park and the accompanying Harborwalk as soon as it is safe to do so. As an alternative walking path consider utilizing Linear Park. The shared use path, built on a historic railroad bed abandoned in the late 1890's runs along a tidal canal which gently sweeps through the historic neighborhoods of Punta Gorda. Running from the southern end of the City center to Fishermen's Village, this path will link you to the Harborwalk and passing the History Park and the Punta Gorda Library.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude for our incredible staff, vendors and generous donors that made our Inaugural Neighborhood Fall Festival a resounding success! Your contributions, time and energy helped bring our community together for an afternoon of fun, food, and connection, especially during these challenging times. Thank you to all the families that joined us at the Cooper Street Recreational Center for this fun event. Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at [citymgr@cityofpuntafordafl.com](mailto:citymgr@cityofpuntafordafl.com) or by calling the main office line at 941-575-3302.

**Bayfront Center demolition** - The contractor has begun the demolition of the Bayfront Center. Contractors have removed all construction debris and steel trusses from the site. They will be removing the block walls this week and hauling off that debris. Please be advised to take extra caution in the area during the demolition and follow all detours for bicycle/walking paths.

**Hurricane cleanup** - The haulers are on day 14 of cleaning up the construction debris from Hurricane Milton, as of today the contractor has hauled 110 loads to the landfill resulting in 5,753 cubic yards of material. The contractor will be heading to the downtown district with the large haulers to pick up the commercial construction debris on November 2 and 3. Please refrain from parking near the piles so the contractor can clean up all the debris.

**Right of Way:**

- \* Crews continue cleanup efforts in several locations throughout the City.
- \* Crews continue to work on Ponce de Leon Park clean-up efforts.
- \* Continue to repair/restore street signs throughout the City.

**Important public service announcement regarding construction on U.S. 41 from the**

**Florida Department of Transportation - (FDOT)**, District One, is providing roadway improvements to U.S. 41 (Tamiami Trail) from William Street to the Peace River Bridge (441524-1). This project is entering Phase Two of construction as of September 12, the contractor will begin to pave portions of the proposed roundabout that will be constructed at the intersection of Tamiami Trail (U.S. 41) and Carmalita Street. During the process of Phase Two construction, motorists should follow the posted detour:

**Phase Two construction detour - US 41 (Tamiami Trail) from William Street to Peace River Bridge: Construction Project:** The contractor will pave portions of the proposed roundabout with base and structural asphalt. Signs are being placed for the phase two detour listed below. Motorists should expect daytime left lane closures northbound from William Street to Carmalita Street and southbound from Cross Street to William Street.

**Phase 2 detour** - Cross Street will be closed for the duration of phase two construction. Motorists attempting to access Carmalita Street from Cross Street will have to use the posted detour. They will turn left on West Charlotte Avenue, then right on Taylor Street, and continue until they reach Carmalita Street. Motorists are asked to exercise caution and reduce their speed while driving through the work zone. The construction schedule may change due to weather or other unexpected conditions.

Residents can reach out to FDOT's Communications Team for additional information or inquiries. Contact Bryn Parsons at 239-985-7864 or via email at [bryn.parsons@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:bryn.parsons@dot.state.fl.us). We appreciate your patience and cooperation as these improvements are made to enhance our roadways.

**Hurricane tips** - Each year, I publish a list of hurricane tips I have compiled from living here over 27 years. I am happy to share this document with all of you, and thanks to the City for posting it on the City's website! We've already had a couple of named storms, so stay safe this season. Hurricane season is here, so please be prepared! Click [HERE](#) for this year's tips!

**Re-election news** - Thanks to everyone who turned out for our recent events! I am humbled and grateful for the outpouring of support I have received so far, for my re-election campaign. It truly means a lot to me. If you haven't already been in touch, I will be reaching out to those who have supported me in previous years to ask for your support once again. If you would like to receive invitations for upcoming campaign events, please click [HERE](#) and I will add you to my invitation list. Please provide your name, address, email and a phone number. Details will be sent to you upon receipt regarding date, time and location. Also, if you would like a yard sign, please click [HERE](#) and we'll get you one right away. Thank you all for your continued support. We have some great things happening in our beautiful City and I would be honored to continue working for all of you.



**Your vote is your voice!** Please do your homework and research the candidates in the upcoming election. This will be a pivotal election for our City. Your current City Council members have dedicated their time and service to the residents in our City and deserve to be re-elected. There are a lot of projects currently being proposed throughout the City, due to the positive changes implemented by City Council with our new award winning Comprehensive Plan and updated Land Development Regulations (LDRs). These LDRs clearly outline the new building code standards that are business friendly, and which help developers clearly understand what is and is not permitted in our City. We are starting to see a lot of interest in filling in the open parcels downtown, which is very encouraging. Please remember that the current ratio of residential vs. commercial tax base is 89% residential vs. 11% commercial. We must work to move the needle and bring in more commercial business if you want to see some relief in your taxes. Experience matters! **Vote to re-elect your incumbent Council members: District 1 - Donna Peterman, District 2 - Bill Dryburgh, and District 4 - Lynne Matthews.** If you would like to learn more about the three of us, our websites are as follows: [www.lynnematthews.org](http://www.lynnematthews.org) [www.donnapeterman.com](http://www.donnapeterman.com) [www.billdryburgh.com](http://www.billdryburgh.com)

**Voting information** - This is going to be a big year for voting, from everything at the federal level for the President of the United States, to local elections

<b>Election Days</b> Presidential Preference Primary Election: March 19, 2024 Primary Election: August 20, 2024 General Election: November 5, 2024	<b>Early Voting Dates</b> Presidential Preference Primary Election: March 4-17, 2024 Primary: August 5-16, 2024 General: October 21-November 3, 2024
<b>New Registration/Party Affiliation Change Deadline!</b> Punta Gorda City Election: October 10, 2023 Presidential Preference Primary Election: February 20, 2024 Primary Election: July 22, 2024 General Election: October 7, 2024	<b>Vote by Mail Dates</b> (P.S. 101.62) The initial batch of Vote by Mail ballots will be mailed out between the 40th and 33rd days prior to an election to those voters who have already requested them. Subsequent mailings will be mailed out daily as new requests are received.

at both the City and County level. Here are some important dates to put on your calendar in advance of the upcoming primary and general elections. Make sure you update your Vote By Mail status, as you have to do it after every general election now by Florida statute. For information, click [HERE](#).

**City Council meeting** - City Council will meet at 9 a.m. on November 6 at the Military Heritage Museum.



**Citizens Academy registration** - Beginning October 1, the registration for Citizen's Academy opened for all Punta Gorda citizens to register. The program provides insight into City government. These informational sessions provide information regarding the roles and responsibilities of our citywide departments. The program runs biweekly from January 21 through April 29. Information regarding Citizen's Academy may be found by clicking [HERE](#), where you will also find the registration form. For additional questions, please call the Public Works Administration office at 941-575-5050

**Laishley Park Splash Pad** - Construction continues at the Interactive Fountain area in

Laishley Park. This work includes rehabilitation and upgrades to the splash pad/play area. Play equipment installation is nearly complete. Please use extra caution while driving or walking through the park due to construction personnel and equipment. To the highest extent possible the restroom facilities will remain open to the public. The access for the restrooms will be from the marina side of the building. There will be periodic temporary sidewalk closures immediately adjacent to the construction area as required for public safety. The construction area will be closed to the public at all times during this period. The enhanced fountain area is scheduled to reopen in late 2024.



**Fiber optic internet network** - The fiber optic internet provider Hyper Fiber has been issued permits for a portion of the construction project to install a citywide fiber optic internet network within the City right-of-way. This project will be under construction during the next several months as they install the network citywide. They are currently working in the areas highlighted in red. The green areas are where the work is completed and their permit has been inspected for final by the engineering department. Additional areas are scheduled to be final in the next several weeks. The blue areas are where installation will take place as the project progresses. Construction is beginning in Burnt Store Isles and Burnt Store Meadows.



Initially you will see utility markings within the City right-of-way, followed by the directional drilling of the fiber optic conduit. Fiber optic boxes will be installed in the right-of-way or easement at the edge of your property. Once the installation of the underground and service points has been completed for the entire sector, crews will then return



to individual locations for the restoration of sod. This will take place at the end of construction in each sector. Please be patient and allow time for the restoration. The City engineering department will be performing spot inspections during construction as well as a final inspection when the restoration is complete to ensure the contractor's restoration meets the City's requirements. Hyper Fiber has provided a telephone number to call if citizens have questions or concerns about the project and installation. HyperFiber has provided a telephone number to call if citizens have questions or concerns about the project and installation - call Hyper Fiber's Lori Haight at 501-844-6340. Please use extra caution while driving through the project area due to construction personnel and equipment.

**Licensed/unlicensed contractors** - As a reminder, all contractors who will be performing structural work on your home (roofs, pool cages, soffits, etc.) must be a contractor licensed in the State of Florida - click [HERE](#) to check on a specific company, AND they must also be



registered with the City of Punta Gorda in order to be able to pull a building permit, which is required by law. You can check on the status of a contractor's registration with the City by clicking [HERE](#) and typing in the name of the company you wish to check on. Failure for a contractor to have the appropriate licensing and registration could result in a felony for the contractor. Additionally, they may not have the required insurance and liability insurances that the state requires. Please do your homework before you sign anything!

**Dockside dredging** - Property owners that are listed on the Hurricane Ian seawall damage list will not be allowed to have dockside dredging performed adjacent to the seawall until the seawall has been repaired. Any dredging along the damaged seawall may cause damage.

**Stabilizing erosion** Just a friendly reminder for property owners to regularly check the condition of their tarps or plastic that is protecting the eroded areas. Tarps and plastic tend to become brittle in the sun and may start falling apart. Utilizing plastic during a rain event will help keep the soil in place preventing further erosion.

**Canal maintenance seawall failure update** - Construction schedules have been updated and are posted on the Canal Maintenance website for the next six months look ahead. There are 21 projects in Punta Gorda Isles under construction with 114 projects completed, and all 30 seawall projects in Burnt Store Isles have been completed. Phase two has started in the SW Zone.

**Establishing sod after seawall replacement** - Placing the sod is the final phase of seawall replacement construction. As per the City ordinance, property owners are responsible for establishing the sod after it has been placed and the City will not reimburse the owners for their water usage.

**Vessel speeds** - Canal Maintenance is asking people to be mindful of the current situation in the canals with seawalls being damaged. City code states that the operation of vessels in the canals shall be Slow Speed Minimum Wake in the waterways within the City limits. The speed and operation in the Ponce Inlet, Pompano Inlet, Bass, and Snook Inlet are Idle Speed and No Wake. Wakes from watercraft can cause additional erosion and damage to seawalls already compromised.

**Dock Match program** - The Punta Gorda Boaters Alliance (PGBA) has once again set up a program called *Dock Match*, which is to help facilitate relocation of boats that will need to be temporarily relocated from properties that had seawall failures. If you have a dock that is vacant and would like to make it available to another PGI or BSI boat owner, please click [HERE](#) to register your dock. Boat owners will have a list available to assist them in connecting with you to try and match their needs to your dock availability. I worked with the PGBA after Hurricane Irma to set this up in 2017 and it was used quite a lot by many residents. This program has been approved by the PGBA and the City of Punta Gorda.



**Answers to some of your questions** - I receive many questions each week from residents,

asking all kinds of things about Punta Gorda activities. Here is one from this week:

*Where can I apply to FEMA to file a claim?* Here's the latest information I have - FEMA Disaster Recovery Center Relocation!! The FEMA Disaster Recovery Center at South County Regional Park Recreation Center has closed. The Disaster Recovery Center relocated to the Tringali Park Community Center, 3460 N. Access Road in Englewood. The DRC will open Thursday, October 31 and be open 7 a.m.-7 p.m., seven days a week. Disaster recovery centers provide disaster survivors with information from Florida agencies, FEMA, and the U.S. Small Business Administration. Individuals can get help applying for federal assistance and disaster loans, update applications and learn about other resources available. You can apply for FEMA assistance online at DisasterAssistance.gov or call the FEMA Helpline 1-800-621-3362, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week. Help is available in many languages.

If you ever have questions, please email me at [lmattews@cityofpuntagordaf1.com](mailto:lmattews@cityofpuntagordaf1.com). I respond to all emails that are personally directed to me, or I will ask a staff member to respond to you. Occasionally, staff needs to respond if it is a complex answer, and sometimes it takes a few days to research various subjects. Please be patient, as we will get back with you.

**Military Heritage Museum** - Stop in to see the fascinating interactive exhibits, and check out the schedule of wonderful entertainment in the Gulf Theater. Our mission is to promote an understanding and respect for the rich military heritage of the United States and the sacrifices made by all who serve, living and deceased, emphasizing that freedom isn't free. For more information, click [HERE](#). To check out the schedule for this season's fabulous shows in the Gulf Theater - click [HERE](#).



**Would you like to be on the mailing list for the Military Heritage Museum, and receive advance notice of upcoming events?** If so, please click [HERE](#). You MUST include your name and email address in your request in order to add you to the database.

**There are a lot of great events coming up in town, so don't miss out on these:**

November 9 - Veterans Day parade downtown - CANCELLED

November 9-10 - Arts & Crafts Show, Event Center. For information, click [HERE](#).

November 13 - SW Florida Honor Flight returns home, PGD, approx. 9 p.m.

November 16 - Lighting of the Village, Fishermen's Village. For information, click [HERE](#).

November 17 - The Florida Philharmonic *All Brassed Up*, BS Pres. Church. For information, click [HERE](#).

December 6 - Christmas tree lighting downtown. For information, click [HERE](#).

December 6-7 - Premier Auto Auction, Event Center. For information, click [HERE](#).

December 14 - Christmas parade downtown, noon. For information, click [HERE](#).

December 21 - Christmas Lighted Boat Parade, PGI canals. For information, click [HERE](#).

February 28-March 1 - Peace River Quilt Show, Event Center.



For upcoming events and festivals from the City's website, click [HERE](#).

Punta Gorda Chamber's events page - click [HERE](#).

Charlotte County Visitors Bureau events page - click [HERE](#).

Gulf Theater at the Military Heritage Museum - click [HERE](#).

Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association - click [HERE](#).

Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center, click [HERE](#).

Visual Arts Center events, click [HERE](#).

Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce events, click [HERE](#).

Fishermen's Village events, click [HERE](#). For all Fishermen's Village event information, you must go to the calendar under Events and click on the specific listing for details.

### **Police Department:**

**Beware of illegal contractors** - With the high demand for home repairs after Hurricane Milton, illegal contracting has once again become a problem. Please beware and ensure that any contractor you hire is appropriately licensed. You can verify a license through the Department of Business and Professional Regulation by clicking [HERE](#) or calling 1-850-487-1395.

**National Drug Take Back Day** - This past weekend, the Punta Gorda Police

Department and Drug-Free Punta Gorda participated in the Drug Enforcement Agency's National Drug Take Back Day in the lobby of the Public Safety Complex. Eighty-two (82) pounds of pills were turned in for safe disposal during those four hours.



**Volunteers In Policing (VIP)** - Our volunteers are an absolutely vital part of this police department and we appreciate them greatly! Members of the community interested in volunteering may contact the Volunteer Staff Coordinator at 941-575-5536 or by emailing [vip@pgorda.us](mailto:vip@pgorda.us).

**Police Officer testing** - The Punta Gorda Police Department is currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. A virtual testing process will take place in January 2025. Applications must be received by January 3. The written exam will be completed online between January 10 and 17, and virtual oral board exams will be conducted via Zoom on January 30. The department is accepting applications from certified and non-certified candidates.

**Public Safety Dispatcher testing** - The police department continually conducts new hire testing to prepare for future openings. Currently, the department is accepting applications for the position of Public Safety Dispatcher. The exam will be held virtually between January 17 and 24. Applications must be received by January 10.

**Internship program** - The police department is currently accepting internship applications for spring of 2025 semester. Our internship program is open to college students and high school seniors interested in gaining educational experience in law enforcement, criminal

justice, and small government administration. Spots fill up quickly and the selection process can be competitive, so we encourage potential interns to apply today!

**To apply for employment or for more information, please visit [www.pgpdjobs.com](http://www.pgpdjobs.com) or contact our Employee Development Coordinator at 941-575-5571 or by email at [employeedevelopment@pgorda.us](mailto:employeedevelopment@pgorda.us).**

**Fire Department: Check your batteries** - It is recommend that the batteries in smoke detectors be replaced every six months. A good way to remember when to replace the batteries is replacing them when daylight saving time occurs. With that being said, the “fall back” daylight savings is November 3 and it's the perfect time to check/replace your batteries. Having properly working smoke detectors is crucial for early detection and preventing total loss. Smoke detectors use sensors to detect smoke particles in the air. When the sensor detects smoke above a certain level, it triggers an alarm to sound. Smoke detectors usually take 9 volt batteries. Another option is to purchase a 10 year lithium battery. The Punta Gorda Fire Department is more than happy to assist changing the batteries in smoke detectors, as long as the batteries are provided by the homeowners. If assistance is needed changing the batteries in your smoke detector don't hesitate to call 941-575-5529.



**Lot mowing** - The City will begin a new mowing cycle on November 11.

**Planning Corner - Code Compliance reminder** - Code Compliance staff would like to remind our residents and pool contractors that draining pools directly into canals or storm drains is prohibited. Please make sure that if you need to drain your pool, the water filters through the grass before entering the canal or stormwater system.

**Building Division: Beware of solicitors and unlicensed contractors** - Beware of solicitors! Due to the recent storms in our area, there have been numerous reports of renovation/remodeling companies and contractors going door to door offering free estimates. These companies may not be licensed in the city and soliciting is prohibited. If you receive a visit from a solicitor please contact Code Compliance at 941-575-3352. If this occurs after normal business hours or on a weekend, please contact the Police non-emergency number, 941-639-4111.

\* Under Florida Statute 489.127, anyone providing unlicensed contracting services during a state of emergency commits a felony of the third degree.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Allowing an unlicensed person to perform work on your property puts you, as the owner, at risk?

\* Unlicensed contractors are unable to obtain workers compensation coverage or general liability insurance

\* Unlicensed contractors are unable to obtain permits for the work they are doing. Should injuries occur at the site, the owner may be liable for the injuries.

\* Any work performed without a permit, may not be covered by your insurance company in the event of future claims.

Any person who does work without the correct licensure during a state of emergency may be charged with a felony?

\* Per Florida Statute 489.127(2)(c): "Any unlicensed person who commits a violation of subsection (1) during the existence of a State of Emergency declared by executive order of the Governor commits a felony of the third degree."

This applies to all types of construction?

\* Not just that which is associated with repairs due to a tropical storm or hurricane, and is in addition to the regular penalties incurred by unlicensed individuals acting in the capacity of a contractor.

It is easy to find out how to work in the City?

\* Anyone coming into the area wanting to work as a contractor should first contact the City of Punta Gorda Building Department for more information at 941-575-3324

\* Note: This applies to all licensed contractors - all contractors working in the County must register with the City prior to contracting for work.

For more information about whether a person is licensed and registered as a contractor in the City of Punta Gorda, or to notify us of possible unlicensed activity, please contact the City Building Department at or visit [Licensing Portal - License Search](#) or click [HERE](#).

**Neighborhood Fall Festival** - The City of Punta Gorda and Punta Gorda YMCA hosted a Neighborhood Fall Festival at the Cooper Street Rec Center on October 26. This amazing family-friendly event featured free food generously provided by Gettel Lincoln and Brotha Man BBQ, and trick or treat tables sponsored by local nonprofits including Big Brothers, Big Sisters, LULAC, ShorePoint Health, Charlotte County Imagination Library, Drug Free Punta Gorda, TEAM Punta Gorda, Charlotte County EMS, Blanchard House Museum, C.A.R.E., Florida Dept of Health, Punta Gorda Visual Arts Center, Punta Gorda History Center, and the Punta Gorda Masonic Lodge #115. Dozens of other organizations and local businesses donated candy, supplies, decorations, and prizes for the costume contest, including the Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, C.U.S.I., PGHA, CHEC, Military Heritage Museum, Beef O'Brady's, Brooklyn Joe's, PGICA, St. Mary Baptist Church, Iguanaland, The Firm Advertising Agency, Village Brewhouse, Insane Conez, Working Cow, CCAA, and more! A special shout out to the City Clerk's Office, Water Treatment Plant, Facilities, Right-of-Way, Punta Gorda Fire Department, Punta Gorda Police Department, and City and Cooper Street



Rec YMCA staff who volunteered their time and efforts!! Thank you to the community for making this event such a success and we can't wait for next year's Fall Festival at the Punta Gorda Library."

**Peace River Wildlife Center** - Construction has begun for the Peace River Wildlife Center located next to the Hounds on Henry Dog Park! This work includes the development of the wildlife center and the expansion and reconstruction of the parking lot for the Hounds on Henry Dog Park. A temporary entrance to the dog park has been constructed and will be opened soon. The existing entrance will only serve as a construction access to the Peace River Wildlife Center development area once the temporary entrance is opened. Please use the new temporary entrance once it has been opened to traffic for access to the Hounds on Henry Dog Park.



Please use extra caution while driving or walking through this area due to construction personnel and equipment. Please obey the newly installed stop signs as dump trucks are delivering fill dirt at the rate of approximately (30) loads per day. These trucks require a wide turn area, and vehicles should give them plenty of room to maneuver. The fenced construction area will be closed to the public at all times during this period. If you have any questions, please contact the Public Works Department at 941-575-5050 during the hours of 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Billing and Collections** - If you have had your pool drained and refilled after flooding from Hurricanes Helene or Milton, you may be eligible for a special refill adjustment that will **not** count towards the standard once per year adjustment limit.

After the pool has been refilled, please complete the Owner Adjustment Request form found on the City's website under government - billing & collections - forms.

You must include the following on your form:

- Specifically note that this pool refill is due to Hurricane Helene or Milton.
- Provide the dates when the pool was drained and the dates when the pool was refilled.
- The date of the completed repairs and a copy of any invoices and receipts attributed to the repair (whether contracted or completed by the property owner.)
- How many gallons the pool holds

Please note: If the billed consumption is being estimated, the adjustment will be held until an actual read of the meter is obtained.

Please send your completed form and copies of applicable receipts/invoices no later than January 31, either by email - click [HERE](#), by mail to Billing & Collections, 126 Harvey Street, Punta Gorda, FL 33950, or you may drop it off at the front desk on the second floor of the City Hall Annex.

**Human Resources: Open positions** - The City of Punta Gorda offers a very generous benefit package to include medical, dental, vision, life insurance, and a defined contribution retirement plan with matching contributions. The City of Punta Gorda offers a very generous benefit package to include medical, dental, vision, life insurance, and a defined contribution retirement plan with matching contributions. The City of Punta Gorda has a variety of employment opportunities available - learn more by clicking [HERE](#).

JOIN OUR TEAM

Currently hiring for the following professional positions:

**Utility Engineer-Utilities** - A professional position responsible for Utilities Engineering and providing technical engineering services for City utilities construction and improvement projects.

**Senior Accountant Finance** - A professional position responsible for applying the principles of accounting to analyze financial information and prepare financial reports by compiling information, preparing profit and loss statements, and utilizing appropriate accounting control procedures.

**Utilities Maintenance Worker II-Wastewater Collection, Utilities** - A skilled laborer position responsible for the construction, maintenance and repair of wastewater collection facilities and systems.

**Crew Chief-Water Distribution** - An entry level supervisory position responsible for the construction, maintenance, and repair of water distribution facilities and systems.

**Urban Design Manager-Urban Design** - A professional managerial position responsible for all City planning and zoning activities, including community development and land use.

**Code Compliance Supervisor-Code Compliance** - A skilled technical and supervisory position responsible for supervision of the day to day Code Compliance operations, enforcing all of the City's Land development Regulations, as well as Chapter 9A, Nuisance Code, as they relate to property zoning, design, and maintenance standards or other City Code standards.

**Planner-Urban Design** - A highly-complex professional that participates in advanced, highly-complex professional planning activities.

**Planner I-Assistant Planner, Urban Design** - An entry level planning position assists in current and long-range urban planning efforts, including land development review and analysis and planning studies in support of new and updated programs and regulations.

**Planner II-Associate Planner, Urban Design** - An advanced professional planning position responsible for researching and analyzing technical data in the field of city planning.

Performs professional and technical work developing, researching, data collection, mapping and maintaining public planning studies and programs on land use, zoning, conservation, housing, transportation, population, coastal management, historic preservation and other areas of comprehensive planning activities.

**Senior Project Manager, Public Works** - A professional technical position responsible for

overseeing projects from inception to completion and ensuring that contractors perform work that meets City specifications and expectations.

**AMI Technician I, Water Distribution, Utilities** - A skilled technical position responsible for monitoring, maintenance, and repair of automatic meter infrastructure systems.

**Assistant Buyer-Procurement, Finance** - A clerical position responsible for limited purchasing duties, screening and referring telephone calls, greeting the public and vendors, typing, filing, and operation of various office machines.

**Safety Tips:** Here are some safety tips for the time change in November 2024.

- \* Check your alarms - Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to ensure they work properly. Replace the batteries if needed, and make sure the alarms are installed in every bedroom and on every level of your home.
- \* Update your evacuation plan. Review your evacuation plan and first aid kit, as these may need to be updated for the winter.
- \* Check your vehicle - Make sure your headlights, taillights, and signal lights are working, and clean your windshield. You can also replace worn wiper blades and refill fluid reservoirs.

**Sanitation:** Dumpster guidelines - As a reminder, construction debris is strictly prohibited from being placed inside the dumpster. The dumpster will not be emptied if construction debris is placed inside the dumpster and the property owner or business will be responsible for removing the debris before the dumpster can be serviced. Storm debris guidelines can be found on our website - click [HERE](#). Please follow the guidelines listed below to ensure proper service.

Please follow the guidelines listed below to ensure proper service:

- \* Do not block the dumpster or dumpster enclosure with vehicles or trash. If the dumpster is blocked, it will not be serviced.
- \* Maintain a five-foot clearance around the dumpster free of trash and debris at all times.
- \* All trash must be placed properly inside trash bags and the trash bags placed inside the dumpster.
- \* Do not place loose trash or trash bags on the dumpster enclosure floor. The property owner is responsible for keeping the area clean. City staff is responsible for emptying the dumpster only.
- \* Construction debris and hazardous waste are strictly prohibited from being placed inside the dumpster. \* Hazardous waste should never be placed inside of the dumpster, it could cause a fire, injure staff, and destroy the equipment. The property owner will be responsible for all damage caused by hazardous waste placed inside the dumpster.

**Regular yard waste services suspended by City staff** - Regular residential yard waste services are canceled until further notice. Staff have been working alongside the haulers



seven days a week cleaning up yard waste piles. Sanitation is using two clamshell trucks, two regular garbage trucks, and three dump trucks, to collect loose vegetative piles only at this time. Additional vehicles will be added as they become available. Residents are encouraged to combine the yard waste and place the debris in larger piles along the right-of-way. Do not place vegetative debris piles in cul-de-sacs, near wires, poles, etc. Residents do not need to call for a special pick-up.

**Regular household trash** - Regular household trash is being collected at this time. Please place the regular household trash inside the city-issued trash cart. If residents lost their city-issued carts in the storm and need a replacement, please call the Public Works Department at 941-575-5050 during the hours of 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Welcome to new or transferred businesses in the City this week:** Clear View Financial Services, 223 Taylor Street; Diana's Cutting Edge Salon and Boutique, 1133 Bal Harbor Blvd.; Dupont Seamless Gutters, 306 East Grace Street, Unit 112; Prime Tax Service, 109 East Olympia Avenue; Time Well Spent, 2511 Vasco Street; Unfurrgettable Home and Pet Care, 702 Via Formia; Viking Builders of SW Florida, 7517 Coral Tree.

**Groundwater RO plant update** - Maximum total dissolved solids (TDS) is 500 without a waiver. Our numbers are consistently way below the maximum allowable level with the R.O. Plant water in service.



**Board and committee vacancies: Volunteers needed** - Vacancies currently exist on the Building Board, Donation Review Board, Historic Preservation Advisory Board, Police Officers Pension Board and Utility Advisory Board. If you are interested in applying for any position, please contact the City Clerk's office at 941-575-3369 or [pgclerk@cityofpuntafordafl.com](mailto:pgclerk@cityofpuntafordafl.com). You must complete an [Appointment Information Form](#) along with a resume and submit to the City Clerk's Office either in person to City Hall at 326 W. Marion Ave., or to email address above.

If you ever have a question you would like answered, please email me at [Imatthews@cityofpuntafordafl.com](mailto:Imatthews@cityofpuntafordafl.com). I respond to all emails that are personally directed to me, as long as the questions are not related to an upcoming public hearing. Elected officials are not permitted to discuss issues or offer opinions on items that will come before us for a vote. If I don't have the answers to your questions, I will get it for you.

Thanks for staying in touch with what's happening in Punta Gorda. I hope that you find this newsletter informative. If you would like to share it with others, please feel free to do so. If you know anyone else who may want to receive this, please have them email me their

name, email address and zip code, and I'll be happy to add them to the distribution list. Also, if you change your email address, please let me know it is changed so you can continue to receive the newsletter - go to the bottom of the newsletter and "Update your preferences" to keep it current.

**A note to readers of this newsletter** - If you or your email server report my newsletter as having spammy content, it sends a message to Mail Chimp that you have not accepted receipt of the newsletter and it will automatically remove you from my subscriber list. Most of the time, this is unintentional. However if you somehow find you stop receiving it each week, this is the reason. Once you are removed from the database, you stop receiving it permanently. If I see that this happens, I will attempt one time to send you an email and let you know you need to accept a resubscribe request in order to get back into the database. Also, a few of my readers have experienced periodic problems with not receiving this newsletter. It seems that some of the virus prevention programs send the newsletter to spam from time to time, especially if the newsletter is lengthy. Please ensure you have the sending email address in your address book, which is [upstateone@comcast.net](mailto:upstateone@comcast.net). And if you suddenly stop receiving this, please be sure to check your spam folder. I never delete anyone from the subscriber list unless I am asked to do so. Apologies for any inconvenience.

If at any time, you would like to get in touch to ask a question, feel free to contact me.

**Lynne R. Matthews**

**Mayor, City of Punta Gorda**

**Punta Gorda City Council District 4**

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