

Revised 2009



# *Charlotte County* Owner's Manual

The *2009 Charlotte County Owner's Manual* is created and produced by the  
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# Welcome & History



Welcome to Charlotte County, Florida. Thank you for selecting this beautiful county to call home. Located around the banks of Charlotte Harbor, Charlotte County features an abundance of beautiful vistas, sporting activities for all ages, and a relaxed lifestyle. Charlotte County Government has created this Owner's Manual to acquaint you with our government, local organizations and the many resources available in your community.

We encourage you to visit the County Government in Charlotte County or access the many resources online at [www.CharlotteCountyFL.com](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com).

## History

Calusa and Timucus Native American tribes occupied the majority of Charlotte County and surrounding areas until the 1700s. In 1513 Ponce de Leon, the famous Spanish explorer and soldier, attempted the first European colony in the United States at Pine Island, which was later abandoned.

By 1710, the Calusa and Timucus tribes were eradicated by war and slave raids. Creek Native Americans moved into the Charlotte County area and called themselves Seminoles, meaning "migrants." In 1819 the U.S. acquired Florida from Spain and over the next few decades the Charlotte County area was settled by ranchers. By 1856, fighting between the U.S. and the Seminoles culminated in the relocation of the majority of the Seminoles to Oklahoma. Settlement of Charlotte Harbor and the surrounding land continued through the turn of the century.

In 1916, Punta Gorda and Charlotte Harbor Town issued \$200,000 in bonds to build the first bridge across Charlotte Harbor which was finally completed and opened on July 4, 1921. The legislature then divided DeSoto County into five counties: Charlotte, Glades, Hardee and Highlands. The Florida Legislature established Charlotte County on April 23, 1921 with Punta Gorda as the county seat. The name Charlotte was chosen by a public vote.

County business was first conducted in an office building on Marion Avenue in Punta Gorda which served as the first government facility. The Board of County Commissioners voted to purchase property on the corner of Taylor Street and Olympia Avenue in 1927 and the following year the Charlotte County Courthouse was opened for business.



A contest to design the County seal was held by the Board of County Commissioners in 1969. Kathy Nichols, an art student at Charlotte High School, won the contest on December 2, 1969, and was awarded \$25. Her design illustrated the location of Charlotte County on a map of Florida, highlighting the area's great tarpon fishing.

# Elected Officials

Charlotte County Government has a variety of elected officials: the Board of County Commissioners, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Property Appraiser, Sheriff's Office, Supervisor of Elections and Tax Collector. Each of these elected officials act independently. In addition to the elected officials, the County also features a School Board and Airport Authority which act with independent authority.

## Board of County Commissioners

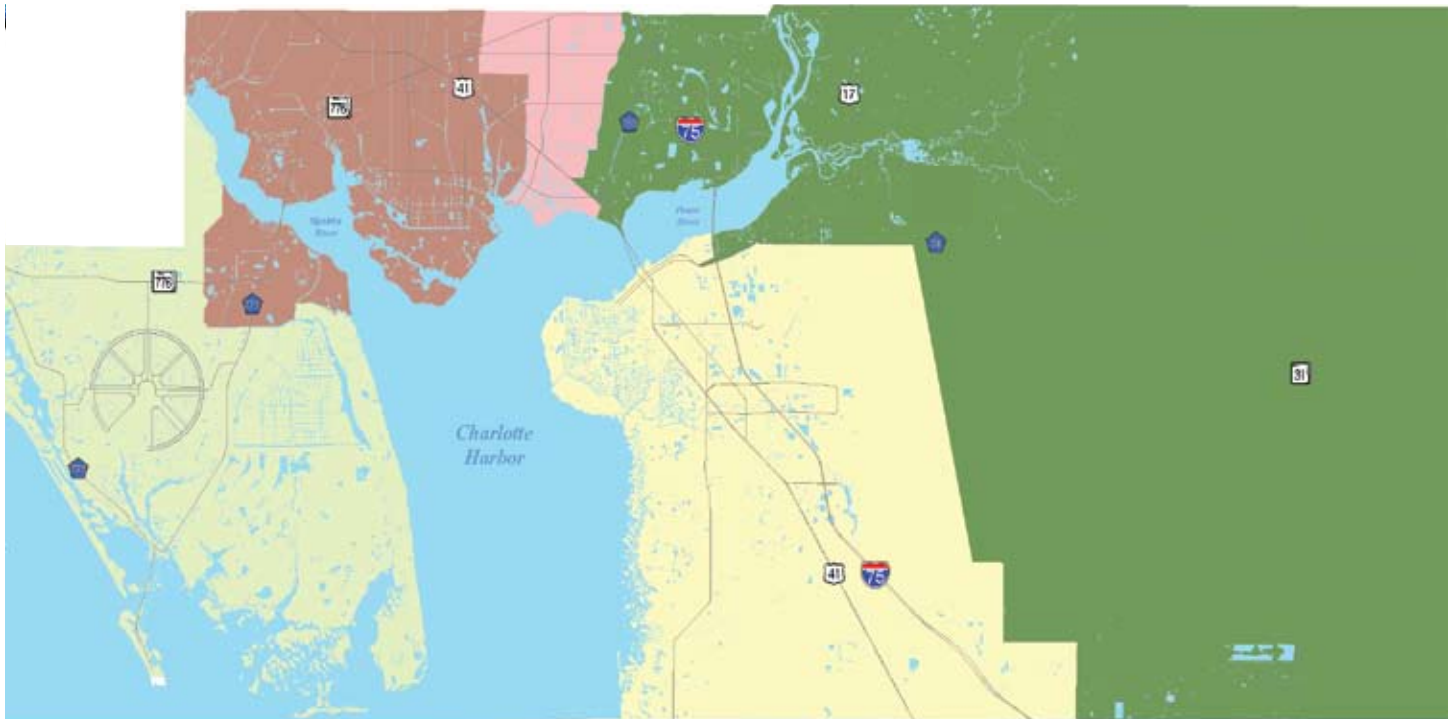
Charlotte County Administrative Complex  
18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL 33948  
941.743.1300 ■ e-mail: [bcc@charlottefl.com](mailto:bcc@charlottefl.com)  
[www.CharlotteCountyFL.com](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com)



Charlotte County adopted a Home Rule Charter in 1985, giving the Board of County Commissioners the authorization to pass laws. The County operates under an elected County Commission, composed of five Commissioners and an appointed County Administrator who is chosen by and responsible to the Board of County Commissioners. The County Administrator is the chief administrative officer of the County and is accountable for all administrative matters and operations under the authority of the commissioners.

The five Commissioners are elected for a four-year term by a county-wide vote. Commissioners from Districts 1, 3 and 5 are elected in presidential election years; Commissioners from Districts 2 and 4 are elected in alternating even years. The Board of County Commissioners meet on the second and fourth Tuesday for regular Board meetings and on the third Tuesday of the month for land use meetings at the Murdock Administrative Complex in Port Charlotte.

## Charlotte County Commission Districts



-  District 1
-  District 2
-  District 3
-  District 4
-  District 5

## Elected Officials



### Clerk of the Circuit Court

Charlotte County Justice Center  
350 E. Marion Avenue, Punta Gorda, FL 33950  
941.637.2199 ■ [www.co.charlotte.fl.us](http://www.co.charlotte.fl.us)

The Clerk of the Circuit Court is an officer of the courts and belongs to the judicial branch of government with the responsibilities of auditor and custodian of all county funds. As an officer of the law, the Clerk of the Circuit Court is accountable for keeping court records, issuing processes, entering judgements and managing court funds.

In Charlotte County, the Clerk is the official recorder who prepares and records minutes of all meetings of the County Commission. The Clerk also serves as the ex-officio auditor to the Board of County Commissioners. Other duties include issuing papers for arrests, issuing summons for the appearance of jurors and witnesses, and compensating jurors. In addition, the Clerk also oversees Civil, Traffic and Misdemeanor courts where marriage licenses and passports are issued and traffic fines are collected. Visit the Clerk's website for more information.

### Property Appraiser

18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL 33948  
941.743.1948 ■ [www.ccappraiser.com](http://www.ccappraiser.com)

The Property Appraiser is required to determine the just value of all real property and tangible personal property within Charlotte County annually as of January 1. Just value is legally synonymous to 100 percent of fair market value. However, due to additional requirements of Florida law, the annual just value determined for real property is typically lower than the amount for which a property may sell. Tangible personal property consists primarily of furniture, fixtures and equipment used in a business and the contents of rental properties. Filing of an annual return is required by April 1.



The Property Appraiser also administers property tax exemptions and agricultural classifications. The most recognized exemption is the homestead exemption, which decreases a property's taxable value by \$25,000 for qualifying homeowners, saving \$400 to \$500 in property taxes each year. An associated benefit is the annual "Save Our Homes" limitation on any increase in "assessed" value. The homestead exemption is available on property owned by legal residents of Florida who permanently reside thereon as of January 1. Qualified homeowners are required to apply for any exemption by March 1.

In addition to the Murdock office, you can contact the Property Appraiser at the following locations:

**South County Annex**  
410 Taylor Street  
Punta Gorda, FL 33950

**West Charlotte Annex**  
6868 San Casa Drive  
Englewood, FL 34224

Agriculture: 941.743.1483  
Real Property: 941.743.1498  
Records/Exemptions: 941.743.1593  
Tangible Personal Property: 941.743.1476

# Elected Officials

## Charlotte County Sheriff's Office

7474 Utilities Road, Punta Gorda, FL 33982  
941.639.2101 ■ [www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org)

It is the mission of the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office to provide quality law enforcement, detention, court security and homeland security services to the citizens and visitors of Charlotte County.

It is the vision of the Sheriff's Office to be a leader in public safety, community service and crime control. We strive to integrate the community policing philosophies of developing partnerships with our community and maintaining a high quality of life through collaborative problem solving in everything we do. It is our vision that Charlotte County remain one of the safest and most enjoyable places to live and visit in the State of Florida and in the nation.

The men and women of the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office pledge to infuse our core values in every aspect of our service to our community. Integrity: We pledge to maintain a strong sense of honesty, morality, goodness, and ethical character. Honesty: We pledge to always be truthful, sincere, upright and decent. Character: We pledge to maintain the highest ethical standards and honorable personal qualities. We wish to serve as role models for our youth, our community and our profession.



**District-1 Office:** West County  
6868 San Casa Road, Englewood  
941.475.9005

**District-2 Office:** Mid-County  
3280 Tamiami Trail, Port Charlotte  
(Promenades Mall) 941.258.3900

**District-3 Office:** South County  
7474 Utilities Road, Punta Gorda  
941.575.5370



## Supervisor of Elections

226 Taylor Street, Punta Gorda, FL 33950  
941.833.5400 ■ [www.charlottevotes.com](http://www.charlottevotes.com)

The Supervisor of Elections Office serves the voters of Charlotte County by providing offices where voters may register, maintaining voter records, absentee balloting, candidate qualifying and signature verification.

In order to register to vote, you must be 18 years of age (may pre-register at 17), be a U.S. citizen and a legal resident of the Florida county where you intend to vote. A voter registration application must be completed and is available at the Supervisor of Elections Offices, libraries and other public locations.

You may also register when you obtain your drivers license or when you apply for public assistance. Applications are available online at the Supervisor of Elections website. If this option is chosen, the completed application must be printed and mailed to the Main Office in Punta Gorda:

### Main Office

226 Taylor Street  
Punta Gorda, FL 33950  
941.833.5400

### Murdock Office

18500 Murdock Circle  
Port Charlotte, FL 33948  
941.743.1387

### West Charlotte Annex

6868 San Casa Drive  
Englewood, FL 34224  
941.474.8188

# Elected Officials

## Tax Collector

[www.cctaxcol.com](http://www.cctaxcol.com)

The Tax Collector is responsible for the collection of ad valorem taxes and other taxes set at the local level, including those by special levying districts, state agencies and county commissions. The Tax Collector also acts as an agent for several state departments, including the Department of Revenue, Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Local Business Tax Receipts are collected by the Tax Collector.

The Tax Collector has three convenient locations listed below. All office hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m, Monday through Friday.

### Murdock Office

18500 Murdock Circle  
Port Charlotte, FL 33948  
941.743.1350

### Punta Gorda Branch

410 Taylor Rd.  
Punta Gorda, FL 33950  
941.637.2141

### Englewood Branch

6868 San Casa Drive  
Englewood, FL 34224  
941.475.7775

Registration, tag and title services for cars, trucks, trailers, vessels and mobile homes can be obtained through any of the three offices. You can also access specialty tags and disability parking permits. Limited driver's license services are available in our Englewood, Punta Gorda and Murdock offices.

### Tags and License Plates

Specialty license plates are available for purchase. You can view the index and images of specialty plates online at [www.flhsmv.gov/dmv/specialtytags](http://www.flhsmv.gov/dmv/specialtytags).

Vehicle registration and license renewals are available online at: [www.cctaxcol.com](http://www.cctaxcol.com)

## Charlotte County CCTV-20

[www.CharlotteCountyFL.com/cctv](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com/cctv)



Charlotte County's premier government access television station, CCTV-20, is located on Comcast Channel 20. Its mission is to provide informative and entertaining programming and to bring the inner workings of County government out into the "Sunshine" for the benefit of County citizens.

CCTV-20 offers viewers coverage of County Commission, City Council and other government meetings as well as special documentaries and informative programs about the environment, culture and history of Southwest Florida. CCTV-20 also produces "Charlotte Showcase," a local magazine show that highlights County programs and services. Many of CCTV-20's most popular programs are also available on demand over at the County website [www.CharlotteCountyFL.com](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com).

## Charlotte County Website

[www.CharlotteCountyFL.com](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com)



The County website provides residents and visitors with a convenient way to access information and services provided by the Commissioners, Administration, and departments that serve Charlotte County.

The County website is a valuable resource for County citizens, one that is useful, informative, easy to navigate and encourages access to government information 24 hours a day.

# Getting Around

## Driving in Florida

New Florida residents are required to register vehicles within 10 days and obtain a Florida driver's license within 30 days.

**Office hours:** Tues. - Fri. 8:30 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.

The Englewood Branch of the Tax Collector's Office, located at 6868 San Casa Drive and the Punta Gorda Branch located at 410 Taylor Street offer driver's license services including testing for

Charlotte County residents. The Murdock office, located at 18500 Murdock Circle, offers limited drivers license service.

The Florida Department of Motor Vehicles website: [www.dmvflorida.org/charlotte.shtml](http://www.dmvflorida.org/charlotte.shtml)

## Dial-A-Ride Program

The Dial-A-Ride transit program is provided by Charlotte County's Human Services Department. This transit program is a point-to-point bus system that serves all residents in developed areas of Charlotte County.

Appointments are required. Sunshine Rides for disabled, elderly and low income are also available.

### Contact Information:

Port Charlotte: (941) 575-4000

Englewood: 697-4000 Ext. 4855

TDD Users: 941.637.2288

[www.CharlotteCountyFL.com](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com) and navigate to Human Services on the drop-down menu.



## Airports

The Charlotte County area is served by local and international airports.



### Charlotte County Airport (PGD)

Located in Punta Gorda.  
I-75, exit 161.  
941.639.1101  
[www.charlottecountyairport.com](http://www.charlottecountyairport.com)

### Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW)

Located southeast of the City of Fort Myers, about three miles west of I-75, at exit 131.  
239.590.4800  
[www.flylcpa.com](http://www.flylcpa.com)

### Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport (SRQ)

Located off I-75 about six miles north of Sarasota.  
941.359.2770  
[www.srq-airport.com](http://www.srq-airport.com)

### Tampa International Airport (TPA)

Located five miles west of downtown Tampa.  
813.870.8700  
[www.tampaairport.com](http://www.tampaairport.com)

# City of Punta Gorda



Punta Gorda boasts a small town atmosphere with all the pleasures of a larger city. The City of Punta Gorda is about 16 square miles and ranks 50th in city size out of Florida's 404 cities. The economy is booming and the cost of living is well below the national average. With all the sunshine and local events, you are among the few who truly do live in paradise!

## History

The City of Punta Gorda which was incorporated on December 7, 1887, is the only incorporated city in Charlotte County and has an approximate population of 17,050. It was originally named "Trabue" in 1885 after developer, Colonel Isaac Trabue, who purchased the land from British investors.

Punta Gorda has traced its roots to a landing at Live Oak Point on the Peace River by Hernando DeSoto in 1539. Punta Gorda is Spanish for "Broad Point" and refers to its broad point of land jutting out into the harbor. Early Spanish attempts to colonize the outer islands in present-day Charlotte County were thwarted by Calusa Indian tribes and the area was slowly settled as the English migrated to Charlotte Harbor on the banks of the Peace River.

In 1884, surveyor Kelley B. Harvey worked to lay out streets and blocks according to instructions from Isaac Trabue, then a Kentucky resident. All waterfront property was designated to be parks and the streets were not to run in a north-south direction, but rather, to wind along the Peace River. The Town of Trabue, a subdivision, was recorded on February 24, 1885; however, by 1887 enough residents in Trabue objecting to Trabue's efforts to control the town's destiny were able to outvote him and revert the name to Punta Gorda during the incorporation process. These 34 men, including four black men and carpenters stranded here after building the old Hotel Punta Gorda, met at the Tom Hector Building in Hector's Pool Hall located upstairs from the town's drug store to draft the City's incorporation papers.



## Website

[www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us](http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us)



The City's website provides the most detailed and up-to-date information about public meetings and City announcements. The website has links to reports and City Communications that are distributed by staff on a weekly basis. Also on the website you will find links to view taped webcasts of Council Meetings, information on all City Departments, lists of events, citizen alerts, job opportunities, maps to parks, Building Permits On-Line and an employee directory.

## Getting Involved

The City has several areas in which residents can become more involved with local government. One area is the Punta Gorda Police Department Volunteers in Policing (VIP) Program. In this program, eligible candidates may serve in a wide range of capacities. Positions are available during business hours Monday to Friday, with some opportunities available during evening and weekend hours.

Another area residents can become involved is through service on one of the City's 15 advisory boards and committees. Appointments are made from applications submitted to the City Clerk's Office by interested residents.

## Elected Officials

326 W. Marion Avenue

Phone 941.575-3369 ■ Fax 941.575.3365

citycouncil@ci.punta.gorda.fl.us ■ www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us

Punta Gorda has a five-member Council elected at large for two-year terms to represent each of the City's five districts. Elections are on a staggered basis each November, with three seats being elected one year and the other two elected the following year. All of the Councilmembers are elected by district. The City Council then appoints its own Mayor and Vice Mayor from among the five Councilmembers. City Council also appoints a City Attorney, City Clerk and City Manager. Punta Gorda practices a Council-Manager form of government, where the City Council is the legislative arm and the City Manager (as opposed to the Mayor) is the administrative arm of the government.

Punta Gorda's City Council meetings are held the first and third Wednesdays of each month at 9:00 a.m. in Council Chambers at City Hall. All Councilmembers may be reached through the Office of the City Clerk by mail or by telephone listed above.

## City Services

### Administration

#### City Hall Annex

326 W. Marion Avenue, Punta Gorda

941.575-3302 ■ ci.punta-gorda.fl.us

The City Manager is the Chief Administrative Officer of the City who acts as a liaison between each City Department and City Council. The City Manager develops the City's annual budget for each fiscal year, directs the day-to-day operations of the City and approves all hirings, firings and disciplinary actions. The City Manager is also responsible for carrying out the policies and ordinances of the governing council, and for appointing the heads of the various departments.

### Utilities

Business hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For all Utilities Customer Service call 941.575-5088. After hours call the Utility Department's emergency number at (941) 575-5070.

Billing questions: City of Punta Gorda Billing and Collection Division at 941.639.2528.

### Public Works

575.5050 ■ 750 Retta Esplanade

### Sanitation

575.5069



### Public Safety

The City provides for the security and safety of citizens through the delivery of law enforcement services of the City Police. The City Fire Department helps citizens to prevent and survive fires, renders emergency fire, rescue and medical assistance and provides assistance during other emergencies.

### Police

Public Safety Building

1410 S. Tamiami Trail 941.639.4111

### Fire

1410 Tamiami Trail

Headquarters: 941.575.5529

# Arts and Museums

## Performing Arts

### The Center for Performing Arts

701 Carmalita Street, Punta Gorda ■ 941.637.0459  
■ [www.thecenter.cc](http://www.thecenter.cc)

Created with community partnerships, CPAC brings the finest in performing arts and school events. CPAC is the home of the Charlotte Symphony and the Charlotte Chorale.



### Charlotte Players

1225 Tamiami Trail, Suite B11, Port Charlotte ■ 941.255.1022 ■ [www.charlotteplayers.org](http://www.charlotteplayers.org)

Oldest performing arts organization in Charlotte County presenting five productions each season. Performing at the Cultural Center of Charlotte County, Inc. and at various venues throughout the county.



## Visual Arts

### Presseller Gallery

209 W. Olympia Avenue, Punta Gorda ■ 941.639.7776  
[www.pressellergallery.com](http://www.pressellergallery.com)

A unique exhibition showcasing the finest in both traditional and digital media artists from around Florida.

### Visual Arts Center

210 Maud Street, Punta Gorda ■ 941.639.8810  
[www.visualartcenter.org](http://www.visualartcenter.org)

Artists display their talents through numerous exhibitions. The Guild provides instructional classes, programs, workshops, lectures, open studio life drawing and portraits and demonstrations for artists of all ages.

## Culture and Museums

**Charlotte County Historical Center** ■ 941.629.PAST (7278)  
detail on next page

### Cultural Center of Charlotte County, Inc.

2280 Aaron St., Port Charlotte ■ 941.625.4175  
[www.theculturalcenter.com](http://www.theculturalcenter.com)

The Cultural Center hosts a full schedule of concerts, plays, lectures, educational, cultural and social activities.

### Military Heritage and Aviation Museum

Fisherman's Village, 1200 West Retta Esplanade, Punta Gorda ■ 941.575.9002 ■ [www.mhaam.org](http://www.mhaam.org)

This museum contains more than 30,000 artifacts to include uniforms, medals and equipment.



# Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources

## Parks

### 941.625.PLAY (7529)

Charlotte County boasts two public beaches, Port Charlotte and Englewood beaches. Each offers restrooms, picnic shelters, barbecue grills and other amenities. There are many boat, canoe and kayak launches throughout the park system. Six Environmental Parks offer opportunities for fishing and kayaking and to observe bird, aquatic and other wildlife.

## Blueway Trails

Be sure to pick up a Blueway Trails brochure guide which provides information on the excellent paddling opportunities in and around the Charlotte Harbor



estuary. Charlotte County's shoreline is divided into the following four distinct sections: Charlotte Harbor, Coastal, Myakka River and Peace River. The brochure indicates launch areas, type of access, amenities and phone locations along the trails. Blueway Trails brochures are located at all County recreation centers and available on the County website.

## Recreation

### 941.625.PLAY (7529)

**Charlotte Harbor Events & Conference Center**  
941. 639.5833 ■

**Charlotte Sports Park** 941.743.2425

Enjoy a multitude of recreational activities at our four recreation centers, two pool facilities, Tentatorium and the Charlotte Sports Park. Many programs are offered, including summer camp, after school programs, athletics, dance classes, concerts, aerobics, bridge and more. The pools, located at South County Regional Park, and Port Charlotte Beach, offer swim lessons and water aerobics. Concerts and festivals are held at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center. The Charlotte Sports Park has Independent Baseball and also presents concerts, the annual Easter Egg Hunt and Colossal Kids Day.

## Recreation Center Locations:

**Harold Avenue Recreation Center**

23400 Harold Avenue ■ 941.627.1074

**South County Regional Park Recreation Center**

670 Cooper Street ■ 941.505.8686

**Port Charlotte Beach Recreation Center**

4500 Harbor Blvd. ■ 941.627.1628

## Tringali Recreation

**Center** 3460 North  
Access Road ■  
941.473.1018



## Libraries

Our libraries offer a large collection of books, movies, audio books, music CDs, magazines and newspapers. Electronic databases, downloadable audio books and access to patron accounts are available to library card holders via the library's web site at [www.charlottecountyfl.com/library](http://www.charlottecountyfl.com/library). Other services include public internet access and programs for all ages, inter-library loan and computer instruction. For our homebound citizens, we offer the "Library Materials at Your Door" program. Regular and large print books, movies, audio books and music on CD are delivered to those who qualify for the service. Library cards are free to county residents and can be used to ride the Dial-a-Ride transit system to and from any library at no charge.

## Library Locations:

**Mid-County Regional Library**

2050 Forrest Nelson Blvd. ■ 941.613.3160

**Englewood Charlotte Public Library**

3450 N. Access Road ■ 941.474.1881

**Port Charlotte Public Library**

2280 Aaron Street ■ 941.625.6470

**Punta Gorda Public Library**

424 W. Henry Street ■ 941.639.2049

## Historical

### 941.629.PAST (7278)

The Charlotte County Historical Center, a division of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department, offers exhibits and programs for the enjoyment, protection and preservation of our community's rich historical resources. Permanent and changing museum exhibits explore many stories throughout this area's history. Educational speakers, workshops and summer camps provide fun learning opportunities for all ages. Current historic preservation projects include the Charlotte County Courthouse, the Placida Bunk House and Englewood's "Cookie House." Membership in the CCHC Society, the Center's fund-raising arm, includes free admission to 280 museums and science centers worldwide.

# Public Safety

## Fire and Emergency Medical Services



Emergency	911
Charlotte County Fire/EMS General Information	941.833.5600
Smoke Detector Information	941.833.5600
Car Seat Information	941.833.5600
Poison Control	800.222.1222
Animal Control	941.833.5690

Charlotte County Fire/EMS is a full service career department that operates out of 14 stations, employs over 200 personnel that respond to more than 20,000 incidents a year.

Fire/EMS provides fire protection and emergency medical services including a Special Operations Division, Training Division and Fire Prevention Division. Additionally, the Department provides innovative public education and injury prevention programs such as the Lil' Bits Child Passenger Safety Program, the Red Dot Medical Information Program, and the Risk Watch Program.

## Charlotte County Emergency Management

### Emergency Operations Center

26571 Airport Road ■ Punta Gorda, FL 33982  
941.833.4000

The County's Office of Emergency Management is responsible for coordinating all activities necessary to protect Charlotte County communities from natural and manmade disasters such as hurricanes. The department provides planning, education and resources to protect our residents' lives and property including developing disaster preparedness plans as well as providing training and exercise activities.

### Hurricane Preparedness Information

National Hurricane Center ■ [www.nhc.noaa.gov](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov)

The National Hurricane Center issues advisories for tropical depressions, storms and hurricanes every six hours. These increase to every three hours when landfall is within 24 hours.

### Tropical Storms and Hurricanes

A Tropical Storm Watch is issued when sustained winds of 39-73 mph could pose a threat in a specified area within 36 hours. A Tropical Storm Warning is issued when tropical storm conditions are expected in the specified area within 24 hours.

A Hurricane Watch is issued up to 36 hours before landfall and indicates that everyone in the designated area should prepare to take protective measures if a Hurricane Warning is issued. A Hurricane Warning is issued when hurricane conditions are expected in the designated area in 24 hours or less. When a Hurricane Warning is issued, precautions should be taken immediately. There may be only a few hours before the onset of hurricane conditions.

Just knowing about hurricanes is not enough to protect you and your family. Put this information to work. Ask questions and plan now. Don't wait until the storm is almost here. Review what you need to do to prepare and protect you, your family and your property. Get a copy of the 2006 All Hazards Guide from any of our County locations or go to our website at [www.CharlotteCountyFL.com/Emergency/2006AllHazardsGuide/](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com/Emergency/2006AllHazardsGuide/).

Call 941.833.4000 to identify your home elevation. You can also learn about Charlotte County's flood zone and storm surge by going to: [www.CharlotteCountyFL.com/Emergency/Flooding](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com/Emergency/Flooding)

# Hospitals

## Charlotte Regional Medical Center

www.charlotteregional.com ■ 941.639-3131 ■ 809 E. Marion Ave, Punta Gorda

Since 1947, Charlotte Regional Medical Center (CRMC) has been dedicated to providing the highest level of patient care possible. CRMC has grown from a 22-bed community hospital to a 256-bed full service acute care medical center.

CRMC is home to The Heart Institute, Rehab and Wellness Center, The Diabetes Center, the Center for Wound Care and the Sleep Disorder Center. Also located at CRMC is Riverside Behavioral Center, the county's only private psychiatric facility.

Nurse Connect is CRMC's free 24-hour medical information and physician referral hotline. Staffed by specially

trained registered nurses, this hotline provides callers with health information, physician referrals and community service information. Call Nurse Connect at 941.637.2497.

CRMC is fully accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations and is licensed by the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services. Visit the web site to learn more about hospital services, to apply for a job, or to search the physician directory.



## Fawcett Memorial Hospital

www.fawcethospital.com ■ 941.629.1181 ■ 21298 Olean Blvd, Pt. Charlotte

Fawcett Memorial Hospital has served the healthcare needs of County residents for over 30 years, building a reputation for providing high-quality care. Fawcett is a full

service acute-care hospital with 238 beds and over 280 physicians on staff representing 30+ specialty fields.

In addition to a broad range of medical and surgical services, Fawcett offers:

- The only JCAHO accredited Primary Stroke Center in Charlotte County.
- Cancer Care program affiliated with H. Lee Moffitt Cancer & Research Center.

- Spine Care Centers of West Florida for treatment of back and neck pain or injury.
- The only C.A.R.F. accredited and licensed inpatient rehabilitation program in the area.
- 24-hour Emergency Department staffed by physicians Board Certified in Emergency Medicine.
- Fawcett Sports and Rehab Services for all outpatient rehabilitation needs.

For more information, call **1.877.442.2362**. Registered nurses are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to answer any healthcare questions and provide free physician referrals. Visit the website for information about services and community events.

## Peace River Regional Medical Center

www.peaceriverregional.com ■ 941.766.4122 ■ 2500 Harbor Blvd., Pt. Charlotte

Peace River Regional Medical Center is a 212-bed Joint Commission Accredited full service hospital that serves residents in Charlotte, Sarasota and Desoto counties. Over the years, PRRMC has expanded the number of services we offer to the community.

### Latest Technology Available:

- The latest-generation Philips Brilliance C.T. 64-slice scanner (the only of its kind in Charlotte County)
- The latest in digital Mammography

### Stroke Care:

- Primary Stroke Center certified by the Florida's Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA).

### Neuro-Surgical/Orthopedic/Rehab Services:

- A 20-bed unit that consolidates the Neuro-Surgical/Orthopedic care and Rehab care together to meet the needs of our patients and our physicians.

### 24 Hour Emergency Care Center

- The newest, most technologically advanced center of its kind in Southwest Florida staffed by Physicians who are Board Certified in Emergency Medicine.

### Obstetric/Pediatric Care

- Peace River has the only licensed Obstetric and Pediatric Unit in Charlotte County.
- Coming soon! Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

### Comprehensive Outpatient Services:

- Outpatient Diagnostic Imaging
- Women's Imaging
- Outpatient Sports and Rehabilitation.

For two years in a row, Peace River Regional Medical Center has received the Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence and is rated among the top 5% of all hospitals nationally by HealthGrades.



# Education

## Charlotte County Public Schools

### Administrative Offices

1445 Education Way ■ Port Charlotte, FL 33948

941.255.0808

[www.yourcharlotteschools.net](http://www.yourcharlotteschools.net)

Contact administrative offices at the above address and phone for information about registration and placement. Your local school contact information is listed below.



<b>Baker Pre-K Center</b>	941.575.5470	<b>Sallie Jones Elementary</b>	941.575.5440
<b>Deep Creek Elementary</b>	941.255.7535	<b>Vineland Elementary</b>	941.697.6600
<b>East Elementary</b>	941.575.5475	<b>L.A. Ainger Middle School</b>	941.697.5800
<b>Kingsway Elementary</b>	941.255.7590	<b>Murdock Middle School</b>	941.255.7525
<b>Liberty Elementary</b>	941.255.7515	<b>Port Charlotte Middle School</b>	941.255.7460
<b>Meadow Park Elementary</b>	941.255.7470	<b>Punta Gorda Middle School</b>	941.575.5485
<b>Myakka River Elementary</b>	941.697.7111	<b>Charlotte High School</b>	941.575.5450
<b>Neil Armstrong Elementary</b>	941.255.7450	<b>Lemon Bay High School</b>	941.474.7702
<b>Peace River Elementary</b>	941.255.7622	<b>Port Charlotte High School</b>	941.255.7485

## Alternative Education, Local Colleges & Universities

Charlotte County offers residents a wide variety of choices for continuing and higher education. Whether you are a first-time or returning student, the County has education opportunities for your career goals.

**Academy @ Charlotte Tech** ■ 941.255.7545

**Charlotte Harbor Center** ■ 941.255.7440

### Adult/Community Education

941.255.7430

**Charlotte Technical Center** ■ 941.255.7500

### Edison State College, Charlotte Campus

941.637.5629 ■ [www.edison.edu](http://www.edison.edu)

### Florida Gulf Coast University - Charlotte

941.505.7414 ■ [www.fgcu.edu](http://www.fgcu.edu)

### IMPAC University

941.639.7512 ■ [www.impacu.edu](http://www.impacu.edu)



## Animal Shelters & Pet Adoption



Adopting a pet can complete your new home and bring happiness to a homeless animal. Charlotte County offers several shelters and pet adoption programs.

Our local Suncoast Humane Society and the Animal Welfare League have many loving cats and dogs needing a good home. Access more information and view potential pets online or visit in person.

### Suncoast Humane Society

6781 San Casa Drive ■ Englewood, FL  
941.474.7884 ■ [www.humane.org/home.htm](http://www.humane.org/home.htm)

### Animal Welfare League

3519 Drance Street ■ Port Charlotte, FL  
941.625.6720 ■ [www.awlshelter.org](http://www.awlshelter.org)

# Human Services

The Charlotte County Human Services Department provides resources to fulfill community needs, builds neighborhood partnerships, and supplies information, education and outreach to the public. The department also partners with other area agencies to provide necessary services.

## Social Services

941.833.6500

Provides assistance such as food pantry, prescription help, hospital or utility bill aid for qualified residents.

## Senior Services

941.833.6500

Offers case management for frail elders, aged 60 or older, including home delivered meals, special transportation or in-home supportive services.

## Transit

941.575.4000

Provides Dial-A-Ride for all county residents in developed areas and Sunshine Rides for disabled, elderly, and low income residents. (See page 9 for more information)

## Veteran Services

941.625.4422

Offers information about eligibility for a wide variety of Veterans' services and provides assistance in accessing Veterans' benefits.



## Information and Referral Division

2-1-1 or 941.205.2161

Coordinates 2-1-1, a comprehensive information and referral service. 2-1-1 is a quick way to connect to a wealth of community information, including health and human services information as well as community and government numbers.

You can call 2-1-1 seven days a week, 24 hours a day. All calls are confidential. Get Connected. Get Answers. 2-1-1 is a free call. Cell phone, TTY users and Charlotte County residents in Englewood, call 941.205.2161.

## Family Services Center

941.235.0159

The Family Services Center is dedicated to supporting families and youth services through centered sponsored activities. Services provided at the center include: afterschool care, parenting classes, educational programs, housing programs, intergenerational programs, juvenile diversion and reentry programs for court-involved youth and counseling services.

## Housing

941.505.4884

The Human Services Department is the administrative agent for the State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) Program. The SHIP Program provides Charlotte County with over \$1.6 million of state funds annually that are used to expand or preserve housing that is affordable to low income households and other groups with special needs.

The SHIP Program funds the following homeowner programs: Down Payment Assistance, Housing Rehabilitation, Foreclosure Prevention, and Community Land Trust Assistance. The SHIP Program also provides funding for affordable rental communities.



Additional information about the SHIP Program and other housing assistance programs is available from Human Services, Housing Division at 941.505.4884.

# Charlotte County Utilities

## Water

Charlotte County Utilities (CCU) ■ 941.764.4300

CCU supplies safe, potable water to more than 52,000 homes and businesses and sanitary sewer services to more than 30,000 homes and businesses. In its four water reclamation facilities, CCU reclaims wastewater to create reuse water, which is safely used for irrigation by golf courses and other facilities. CCU also maintains more than 1,200 miles of water mains, more than 800 miles of sewer lines and mains, 11 miles of reuse water transmission lines and more than 4,200 fire hydrants Countywide.

### Payment Locations:

**Online Payments:** [www.CharlotteCountyFL.com](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com). Go to Utilities Department and click on EZ-Pay.

**Eastport Environmental Campus** ■ 941.764.4300  
25550 Harbor View Road ■ Port Charlotte, FL 33980

## Recycling

### Environmental and Extension Services Department

941.764.4360 ■ Englewood 941.697.4000 x4360

Help keep Charlotte County beautiful by joining the County's recycling program. All County residents can participate in the curb-side recycling program coordinated and managed by the Municipal Solid Waste Division of the County's Environmental and Extension Services Department.

Waste Management provides residents with two recycling bins—one for paper products and one for glass, plastic, steel and aluminum. Recyclables are collected once a week. To obtain bins and determine your pick-up schedule, contact Waste Management at 941.629.1106, 1.877.567.2974 or go to [www.CharlotteCountyFL.com](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com) and navigate to Environmental and Extension Services Divisions. Click on Pick Up Schedule. You can enter your house number and street name.

Motor oil, oil filters, batteries and tires are also eligible for recycling. Waste Management provides two no-charge collections of unbundled yard trash, refuse, or bulky items from residential units per year.

**Murdock Administration Center (Drop-box Only)**  
18500 Murdock Circle ■ Port Charlotte, FL 33948

### Local Phone Service

Embarq ■ 941.629.9311

### Electric Service

Florida Power and Light ■ 941.639.1106  
■ To report outage: 800.468.8243  
[www.fpl.com](http://www.fpl.com)

### Cable Service

Comcast Cable ■ 800.COMCAST (266.2278)  
[www.comcast.com](http://www.comcast.com)

### Natural Gas

TECO People's Gas ■ 877.832.6747  
[www.peoplesgas.com](http://www.peoplesgas.com)



You can also drop off household hazardous waste including paint, pesticides, antifreeze, gasoline, lawn and pool chemicals, hypodermic needles and rechargeable batteries at our two transfer facilities:

**West Charlotte Mini-Transfer & Recycling Facility**  
7070 Environmental Way ■ Englewood, FL  
Tuesday to Saturday - 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Mid-County Mini-Transfer & Recycling Facility**  
19675 Kenilworth Blvd. ■ Murdock, FL  
Tuesday to Saturday - 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### Illegal Dumping

Call the 24-hour hotline, 1.866.Y.DUMP.CC, or fill out an online form located on the County's website. Illegal dumping is the disposal of waste in prohibited areas and usually occurs at night on lightly traveled roads that are not patrolled as regularly as main roads. These materials include construction and demolition waste, abandoned automobiles, auto parts and scrap tires, appliances, yard waste, household trash, as well as medical waste.

# Building, Planning and Development

## Building Construction Services

18400 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL ■ 941.743.1201

Building Construction Services is responsible for protecting the life safety and welfare of all of County citizens. The department also facilitates the construction process.

### Permitting Division

Responsible for the acceptance, movement, tracking, pricing and issuance of all permits.

### Plans Review Division

Ensures proposed building meets all applicable life safety and welfare codes prior to construction. The plans reviewers work closely with contractors, owners, engineers and architects.

### Inspections Division

Ensures that construction matches plans approved by the Plans Review division. They inspect the building during the construction phase and have the ability to stop construction should the work not meet all applicable life safety codes.

### Land Development Section

Coordinates lot splits, street and plat vacations, oversees County-wide mining and excavation activities,



investigates drainage and stormwater complaints, inspects stormwater retention facilities and provides subdivision site development.

### Contractor Licenses

Responsible for ensuring that all businesses have the correct licenses. They administer the local contractor license program, issue occupational licenses and maintain the licenses of State contractors working in the County, including taxi drivers and vending machine operators.

### Building Code Enforcement & Code Compliance

Monitors contractors' licensing and ensures contractors have correct insurance and licensing. Provides guidance for unsafe building abatement, including inspecting structures that may pose a threat to the surroundings.

## Growth Management

18500 Murdock Circle, Building B, Port Charlotte, FL

The Growth Management department assists the Board of County Commissioners in creating and achieving the County's vision for the development of a thriving and sustainable community. The department implements the County Comprehensive Plan and other land development regulations. It oversees public and private land development by regulating land use, zoning codes and by coordinating development review and approval with other county departments.

### Comprehensive Planning Section 941.764.4903

Responsible for creating, maintaining and implementing the County Comprehensive Plan and Community and Neighborhood Plans.

### Zoning Section 941.743.1964

Reviews proposed residential, commercial and industrial land development plans for permitted land uses, building size, building setbacks, fence placement and other land development issues. Also determines impact fee amounts.

### Land Information Section 941.743.1923

Assigns addresses to recorded lots and parcels and sells maps such as aerials, zoning areas, scrub jay locations and general development features.

### Boards and Advisory Committees

Provides staff support for a number of Boards and Advisory Committees. The three most commonly contacted Boards are:

Planning & Zoning Board 941.764.4903  
Zoning Board of Appeals 941.743.1956



Murdock Administration Complex  
941.743.1200  
[www.CharlotteCountyFL.com](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com)

