

Sarasota County Sustainability Initiatives

November 2012

Sarasota County has implemented numerous initiatives to improve the sustainability of both government operations and the community as a whole. This list of the major initiatives is sorted alphabetically by the categories listed below and broken down further to indicate whether the program focuses on changes in government or community practices.

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Agriculture, Landscaping, and Water

GOVERNANCE

- **Athletic Field Water Conservation Program:** Beginning in 1994, Parks and Recreation implemented water conservation strategies including: reuse water, advance irrigation control systems (evapotranspiration based), alternative athletic field turf experimentation, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) best management practices. To date, 64 athletic fields have been retrofitted to utilize reuse water and three sites have implemented the evapotranspiration system conserving millions of gallons of water.
- **Integrated Pest Management Program:** Commitment to the least toxic method to control vegetative and insect nuisances while reducing human exposures to pesticides. IPM best management practices have been implemented across County operations.
- **Reduction in Potable Water Use Program:** In 2010, Facilities Maintenance installed 326 one pint flush urinals with an 85% reduction in water per flush; replaced all water closets and flush valves at the County Administration and R.L Anderson buildings to 1.6 gallon flush units (in many cases replacing 3.5 gallons per flush units), reducing potable water use, and also electricity required for pumping that water; removed 26 single head shower units with un-restricted flow and problematic manual valves at Lido and Caspersen Beaches and Venice Fishing Pier and replaced them with seven “Shower Towers”; an assembly of shower heads with flow restrictors and manual time-out valves. In 2008, Facilities Maintenance changed the Central Energy Plant-A/C Cooling Tower to a reuse water system, saving nine million gallons of potable water a year at \$4.94/kgal; replaced 15 shower heads with 1gpm low flow models with a 66 percent reduction in flow; replaced 200- 2.5gpm faucet aerators with .05gpm ultra-low flow devices for 80 percent reduction in flow.
- **Sustainable Roadside Landscaping:** Horticultural CORE group is working on a plan for roadside and median landscaping that will require less mowing, weeding, chemicals, and watering; with the goal of landscapes that need none of these services.

COMMUNITY

- **Be Floridian:** Sarasota County, UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County and the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program are partnering to implement the Be Floridian fertilizer education campaign.
- **Beach Action Plan:** A proactive Beach Action Plan was developed to reduce the likelihood of beach no-swim advisories caused by water pollution. The inter-jurisdictional group mapped all possible sources of pollution and established rapid response teams to correct problems as they arise. A communication plan was drafted to keep the public informed.
- **Community Gardens Program:** UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County is supporting community and school garden initiatives with dedicated educational, administrative, and technical assistance support services.

- **Drinking Water Conservation:** Reduced drinking water consumption per capita by 40 percent.
- **Farm to School Program:** UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County provides technical assistance and education in support of the Sarasota County Farm to School program, which brings fresh produce from the Sarasota foodshed to youth in area schools.
- **Fertilizer and Landscape Management Code:** To reduce nutrients leaching into runoff, the 2007 ordinance regulates the proper use of fertilizers, requires proper training of professional applicators, establishes a restricted season, fertilizer content and application rates, and fertilizer-free and low maintenance zones. Green Industry BMP and Fertilizer Reduction and Proper Use education programs developed and implemented by Extension. Recent changes to Florida Statutes require commercial fertilizer applicators to be certified by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services by January 1, 2014, in accordance with Section 482.1562, F.S. This certification is good for four years and re-certification will be required. Currently commercial fertilizer applicators are certified through the Department of Environmental Protection and no re-certification is required. There are 17,400 certified professionals in Florida of which 1,190 are in Sarasota. The classes are now offered in both English and Spanish.
- **Florida-Friendly Landscaping:** The UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County Florida-Friendly Landscaping program focuses on education for community associations to promote water use and quality through horticultural practices. The Florida-Friendly Landscaping also offers popular rain barrel and composting classes, as well as the new Homeowner Irrigation Evaluation program. The program has offered 296 education programs to 4500 attendees and has reached 615 Community Associations. There are currently 115 landscapes and 80 public sites with Florida-Friendly Yard Recognition.
- **Golf Course Ordinance:** In 2003, the Land Development Regulations (LDR) were revised to include a requirement that all new golf courses be designed, constructed, certified and managed in accordance with Audubon International Signature Program standards or equivalent. Golf Course Design Standards educational program in place.
- **Gottfried Creek:** Sarasota County was the first in Florida to proactively partner with FDEP on a "Walk the Waterway" approach to bacterial impairment of Gottfried Creek in Englewood. WTW eliminates the need for a costly and time-consuming Basin Management Action Plan usually required by rule. A working group finds and eliminates sources of bacteria.
- **Grey-Water Reuse in Private Homes:** The Florida Building Code, Plumbing Section 602.4 and Appendix C dictate the requirements for materials, design, construction, and installation of gray water systems. These systems help conserve water resources by allowing home owners to collect grey-water, (water from showers, sinks, and laundry) for re-use in toilet flushing and sub-surface landscape irrigation. Although it remains as an option, they are not widely used.
- **Low Impact Development:** During 2011, County staff concentrated their efforts on revising the Low Impact Development Manual to meet existing County and the Southwest Florida Water Management District's requirements. The manual was

presented to the Board of County Commissioners on December 7, 2011. Currently County staff is reviewing both the Zoning Code and Land Development Regulations to identify any barriers or opportunities in constructing LID techniques. Low Impact Development strategies include detention with biofiltration, shallow bioretention, pervious pavements, stormwater harvesting, green roof stormwater treatment systems, and rainwater harvesting.

- **Nutrient Water Quality Standards:** Water Resources participated in the development of estuarine nutrient water quality standards by EPA, FDEP and NEPs. The result was a set of realistic standards much better than the original proposals devised by regulators. Staff analysis of geologic data resulted in great improvement in phosphorus standards for Sarasota County creeks by FDEP.
- **Oysters:** To assess watershed management, oysters were monitored in creeks and the results showed room for improvement. Oyster reefs are a significant marine habitat and naturally purify water. Comprehensive mapping of oysters will be completed in winter 2012-13 and will guide restoration activities.
- **Phillippi Farmhouse Market:** Sarasota County Parks and Recreation, Extension and Friends of Sarasota County Parks have partnered to develop the Phillippi Farmhouse Market. This seasonal market opened in January of 2010 with 19 vendors and now is in its fourth season with approximately 50 vendors. The market is open from October through May to coincide with the growing season in Southwest Florida. Phillippi Farmhouse Market is Sarasota's only weekday farmers market, open every Wednesday 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. October through May. The purpose of the market is to promote sustainability and local growers, featuring produce and plants as well as local food vendors and handmade crafts. Last season, approximately 67,000 shoppers attended the market. The proceeds from the market are donated to the renovation of Phillippi Estate Park's historic Keith Farmhouse, which was the first building erected on the property in 1916. To date, Phillippi Farmhouse Market has donated \$27,000 to the renovation of the interior of the Keith Farmhouse. The exterior of the building was completed in 2010.
- **Rain Barrel Program:** The County continues to host monthly rain barrel workshops and sales events at various locations throughout the County. To date, 1,577 rain barrels have been sold.
- **Seagrass Volunteer Monitoring Program:** The Seagrass Volunteer Monitoring Program trained 21 new people to assist in assessing the health of seagrasses in Sarasota's bays. Seagrass is the most important habitat in the bays and is adopted in State rule as an indicator of estuarine health. Seagrass acreage is increasing locally, while around the world it is in decline.
- **Septic Replacement:** The Phillippi Creek Sewer Replacement Project is a multiyear utilities project to protect public health and safeguard our environment. The program was initiated to improve wastewater treatment for home and businesses. Central sewer lines and other needed infrastructure are replacing individual septic systems and small, private package wastewater treatment plants in many Sarasota County neighborhoods. About 14,000 septic tanks will be replaced over the life of the project.

- **Septic to Cistern Program:** The Florida Administrative Code 64E-6 allows for the conversion of old septic tanks into water conserving cisterns. Approximately 12 conversions have been completed in Sarasota County to date.
- **Stormwater Management:** The Land Development Regulations provide the framework for Stormwater Management regulations to achieve flood protection level of service in the County. There is a proposed state-wide stormwater rule that will help to standardize regulatory efforts including low impact design into the development review process. The County can adhere to or be more stringent than the state-wide rules. Sarasota County received the Florida Stormwater Association's Excellence Award in 2008 for its stormwater programs.
- **Sustainable Agriculture and Small Farms Program:** The UF/IFAS Extension Sustainable Agriculture and Small Farms Program provides education and technical assistance to new farmers and farmers adopting sustainable agricultural practices.
- **Volunteer Scallop Program:** Scallops rebounded in Sarasota Bay in 2012. The County volunteer scallop program produced data used by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to support restoration activities. Scallops are a sensitive species that is an indicator of a healthy ecosystem. This once abundant fishery has been collapsed for decades.
- **Water Atlas:** The Sarasota Water Atlas website, hosted by USF, continues to be the preeminent online source for data, photos, maps and information about local waterways. In partnership with New College, website upgrades created attractive depictions of the health of the local bays as measured by the new Numeric Nutrient Criteria.
- **Water Conservation Rate Structure:** 2003 resolution establishing block water rates to encourage conservation among utility customers.
- **Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance:** This 2001 ordinance requires all new landscaping to employ efficient irrigation and site adaptive plants including micro-irrigation systems and limiting irrigated sod to no more than 50 percent. Last updated in 2005, there is currently an effort underway to amend this ordinance.
- **Water Oral History Project:** Oral Histories on the subject of water continued to be developed by New College students while serving as County interns. The results are posted on the Sarasota Water Atlas website and serve to remind us how abundant our water resources were just a short time ago. Knowing the past helps in the development of restoration targets for the future.
- **Water Quality Improvement Projects:** "Water quality improvement projects were in various stages of being conceptualized, designed, permitted and built throughout 2012. They include:
 - Erosion prevention projects in Phillippi and Alligator Creeks
 - Bioswales, pervious pavement and baffle boxes in Hudson Bayou
 - Wetland restoration in Red Bug Slough
 - A stormwater treatment facility in Alligator Creek
 - Bioswales along Honore Avenue

- Pervious sidewalks on Fruitville Road
 - Cisterns at Fire Stations
 - Gottfried Creek Basin Master Plan update
 - Expansion of the Celery Fields regional stormwater facility
 - Englewood stormwater improvements using LID
- **Water Reuse:** Every day, Sarasota County treats over eight million gallons of wastewater, more than 80 percent of which is reused. Using reclaimed water for irrigation conserves enough groundwater to supply the drinking water needs of over 36,000 families. Over \$6 million in grants have been received for reuse infrastructure. In 1999, the program received the Dr. David W. York Water Reuse Award and in 2001, it was presented the Municipal Water Use Efficiency Award for the most innovative and effective Reclamation and Reuse Program.
 - **Watershed Management Plan Development:** This initiative is to plan, design and implement a comprehensive watershed management plan for each watershed in the County to achieve the following general objectives: 1) Improve and protect existing water quality; 2) Support development of Basin Management Action Plans to address any adopted Federal and State Total Maximum Daily Loads; 3) Provide a more natural hydrologic regime; 4) Protect existing and future property owners from flood damage; 5) Develop ecosystem goals and targets based on the requirements of environmental and biological indicators; and 6) Develop potential alternative surface water supply options that are consistent with and support other plan objectives. The watershed plans for Roberts Bay North and Lemon Bay were completed in 2010. Plan development for Sarasota Bay Watershed began in 2010 and Little Sarasota Bay is underway.

Climate Change

GOVERNANCE

- **2030 Challenge:** "First County in the nation to adopt the 2030 Challenge setting a goal to build Carbon Neutral by 2030. Since the resolution, all building design and construction documents have included requirements to reduce carbon emissions from fossil fuel by 50 percent. Promoted National Association of Counties adoption of 2030 resolution in July 2007.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory:** Greenhouse gas inventory was completed in 2008 for enterprise and community levels in order to establish a baseline emission level. That inventory will inform the selection of a reduction target and the development of an action steps at the government and community levels.

COMMUNITY

- **Community Conversation on Energy and Climate:** Sarasota County and its partner cities were chosen as one of ten "Spotlight Communities" nationwide to host a Community Conversation on Energy and Climate on April 22, 2009. Citizens, business representatives and decision makers came together to discuss priorities for government and individual action to address energy and climate issues locally. A pre-event survey

and small group discussions provided important information on community willingness to act and prioritized policies that will be included in future community energy activities.

Consumption

GOVERNANCE

- **Environmentally Preferable Procurement:** First code language in the nation advocating environmentally preferable procurement. Establishes preference for purchasing products and services that minimize harmful environmental and social impacts and emphasizes long-term value. Examples include least toxic janitorial products, hybrid vehicles, recycled content paper, furniture and carpet made from recycled materials, refurbished ink cartridges, and Energy Star rated computers, HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning), and appliances. Set up a green link with Office Depot that will show over 2,300 green office supplies available for purchase by County employees. Natural Resources pilot program with detailed policy document outlining specific business practices that should be implemented to meet the intent of that component of the procurement code.
- **Green Housekeeping Policy:** Established in 2005, requires use of environmentally preferable cleaning products and services. Choosing products to reduce exposure with less hazardous ingredients that have environmental attributes (biodegradability, low toxicity, low VOC, reduced packaging) can minimize impacts to building occupants, custodial workers, the visiting public, reduce water pollution, and improve indoor air quality. RFP for purchase of green janitorial products was developed collaboratively across business units to include janitorial, trash can liners and paper products that meet EPA Design for the Environment, Green Seal or EcoLogo green cleaning third party certification standards. Green janitorial supplies are available under annual Bid #101150HR for use at all County facilities.
- **Output Management Project:** In 2010, Sarasota County EIT and Communications worked together to reduce the cost of County printers, copiers, scanners and fax machines by eliminating multiple vendor contracts and using technology to monitor and control the use of all this equipment. In 2010, a contract was established with one vendor that has resulted in a 24% drop in equipment rental expenditures, a savings of over \$400,000. In addition, paper reduction has been significant through a policy of default double sided and requiring release of print jobs. In the 18 months since deployment of the new printers, a little over 288,000 print pages were never released or were deleted from the print queue. That reduction in paper eliminated an estimated 5 tons of wood, 32,000 gallons of water and 47 million BTUs of net energy from the paper production cycle.
- **Paperless Workflow and Reporting:** Fire and EMS have implemented paperless Incident Reporting starting at the scene to reduce data entry time and use of paper forms. Upon arrival at the Emergency Department, crews link into the CAD system and pull down the call data and combined with the patient data have a completed run report ready to give to the ER facilities. This allows for quicker transfer of the patient and the ability for the unit to become available for emergency calls. It also improves the quality of incident reports and the speed of processing while eliminating the use of paper.

- **Print and Mail Operations:** Communications Print and Mail operations continue to seek out the most appropriate “green practices” in meeting daily goals and missions. Print shop photocopiers and mail processing machinery all use non-toxic soy based ink; photoconductor drums are free of selenium lead mercury or cadmium; efficient duplex procedures allow minimal use of paper products; all machinery is ENERGY STAR compliant; all cleaners in use are certified non-toxic; use of 100 percent recyclable materials is promoted; and zero percent hazardous waste disposal.

COMMUNITY

- **Ecological Footprint** Calculation of how much of the earth we require to support us as individuals and a community - 22.2 acres of space required per capita. Used as a tool in setting priorities and goals for sustainability. Ecological Footprint Reduction Educational Campaign started in 2004 with classes and events in the community.

Economic and Fiscal Management

GOVERNANCE

- **Budget Reduction Efforts:** The County has absorbed escalating operational costs over the past several years by utilizing improved technology, restructuring departments, and changing employee benefits models. Staffing levels are lower now than they were in 2007 due to a soft hiring freeze and layoffs, while at the same time maintaining high levels of service across the organization.
- **Fiscal Management Strategies:** The County has maintained a conservative approach to budgeting over the years, which has helped mitigate the impact of economic downturns to the services provided to the community. Recent re-structuring of debt has resulted in \$43 million in future interest savings for the County.
- **Formation of the Office of Economic Development:** With County Administration support, in March/April of 2012, Sarasota County’s Economic Development Team organized itself into a formal structure with key players from the Organization taking on new and participatory roles related specifically to Economic Development. This new structure is designed to ensure that the proper County resources are effectively aligned to achieve Sarasota County Economic Development goals. In addition, the new structure will allow for the proper aligning of Sarasota County resources with our various business and community stakeholders so that we can create an environment in Sarasota County that businesses find engaging, inviting and conducive to accomplishing of their goals. A key objective is to develop a strong and cohesive internal Economic Development team in order to effectively facilitate Sarasota County Economic Development goals and to build and strengthen relationships with our business and community stakeholders.
- **Reserves Policy:** In 2006, Sarasota County implemented a policy to maintain two reserves in its General Fund: a Contingency/Emergency/Disaster Relief Reserve of 90 days of operating expenditures and a Budget Stabilization and Economic Uncertainty Fund of 30 to 60 days of operating expenditures. By the end of FY2012, both funds will be fully funded.

COMMUNITY

- **Economic Development Ad Valorem tax Exemption:** On August 24, 2010 the Sarasota County voters approved a referendum authorizing the Board of County Commissioners (the "Board") to grant qualifying businesses a property tax exemption of up to 100 percent for up to 10 years, on both real and tangible personal property. This program is designed to encourage new businesses to relocate to Sarasota County. In addition, it serves as a catalyst for existing businesses to expand, creating new job opportunities for residents within the County. To date, the Board has approved five (5) companies to receive Economic Development Ad Valorem Tax Exemptions. These companies have collectively projected to create a total of six hundred seventy (670) new jobs as a result of expanding or relocating their businesses to Sarasota County.
- **Economic Development Corporation (EDC) Initiatives and Partnerships:** The EDC is currently in the fourth year of its existing five-year plan that includes focusing on value-added industry cluster development, innovation and entrepreneurial development, business climate issues, and local and regional cooperation. In order to accomplish the goals of the five-year plan, the EDC established "Platforms," including one on Sustainable Systems, which focuses on job creation opportunities through aquaculture, marine and science education, "enviro-prenuer" training, and redevelopment and retrofit strategies. The EDC has also continued developing the Partners Council to help build bridges within the community, bringing together businesses, neighborhoods and environmentalists around the benefits of economic development and to promote within the community the valuable work of the EDC. With new leadership of the EDC, the president, Mark Huey, has begun developing the next five-year plan keeping in line with the efforts around Sustainability.
- **Economic Development Incentives:** The Economic Development Incentive Program is an ongoing program used to help retain existing businesses and assist those who want to expand and to help attract new businesses that are considering relocating to Sarasota County. The original funding for the program was allocated in 2009 and 2010. In February of 2012, the Board infused an additional \$6,000,000 into the program based on the previous years' successes. To date, the Board has allocated \$10,449,025 to 29 private businesses, several municipalities and non-profit organizations, and various sports-tourism events.
 - The Entertainment Industry Incentive Program was authorized by the Board in September of 2010, followed by the development and adoption of an Application Process. This is a reimbursement only program and is administered by the Sarasota County Film & Entertainment Office (SCFEO). The funding is from the Economic Development Incentive Fund and the program is designed to incentivize members of the entertainment industry to do their production and post-production work in Sarasota County. By hiring Sarasota County residents, contracting with Sarasota County businesses and purchasing meals and lodging in the County, the goal of this program is to provide economic stimulus to the local economy through the development and expansion of the Film & Television Industry in Sarasota County.
 - The Road Impact Fee Mitigation Program allows impact fees to be waived for qualifying developments in order to assist businesses that will benefit the local economy. Other economic development incentives include a \$2 million Annual Economic Development Assistance Program for new or existing business aid, the

Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund, High Impact Performance Incentive Grant, and several other programs.

- **Economic Stimulus Initiatives:** Sarasota County created a local economic stimulus plan to help boost the local economy during the recession by fast-tracking certain capital projects that had previously been planned to occur over a 15-year period. About \$190 million in projects were identified to be a part of the package that would occur over a 72 month period. The voters approved a bonding package for up to \$300 million to front-load an existing surtax capital improvement program. Bonding and constructing these projects can save money because construction costs are low and it allows the County to begin construction during a time when local businesses and contractors need the work the most. The County has also taken advantage of federal economic stimulus opportunities to fund road projects, criminal justice programs, housing initiatives, and a variety of other important community programs.
- **Florida Master Money Mentor:** UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County offers the UF Florida Master Money Mentor program, a coordinated referral network designed to train and match mentors to residents seeking financial knowledge and practices.
- **Green Business Partnership:** Developed a program that establishes a “green” standard for businesses in Sarasota County and recognizes businesses for achieving that standard. The Green Business Partnership is a collaborative effort of businesses, business organizations and County government. The program is open to all businesses in Sarasota County, regardless of type or size, which implements resource conservation measures and demonstrate a culture of environmental awareness in their business practices. An on-site certification assessment is conducted to verify the performance of applicant businesses to the Green Business Partnership standards. Currently, there are 127 certified Green Business Partners in our community. The program is being replicated in several communities in Florida and elsewhere in the nation.
- **Green Map:** Sarasota County Green Map launched in February of 2010 providing citizens with an online mapping tool to locate local green attributes including community gardens, natural areas, Green Business Partners, ENERGY STAR retailers and builders, and many other community assets. Serves as an economic development tool, as well as an outreach mechanism, on existing sustainability initiatives.
- **Nathan Benderson Park Regatta Season:** The 2011 and 2012 regatta seasons at Nathan Benderson Park hosted multiple competitive events which attracted tens of thousands of attendees. This resulted in thousands of room night bookings and positive economic impact to our community.
- **Siesta Key #1 Beach Designation:** Siesta Key Beach was named Number One Beach in the United States by Dr. Beach in May 2011. This was the result of many years of effort to draw attention to the positive management practices by Sarasota County, including creative recreational opportunities and the 2007 no smoking policy for Sarasota County public beaches. The economic impact of this designation was clear in both tourist tax collections and media attention. Sarasota County had the best summer tourist tax collections ever in 2012 and a key hotel metric ranked Sarasota County highest in 2011, showing that the designation and its promotion benefited all of Sarasota County, not just Siesta Key.

- Venture Development Organization:** Sarasota County received a grant from the Department of Energy to develop itself as a Center for Innovation in Energy and Sustainability. As a part of that grant, a consultant was engaged to develop a sustainable economic development strategy for this community, including a clean tech and green business plan as well as recommendations for incentives at various levels of government that may assist in green job creation. One of the primary recommendations made by the consultant was for Sarasota County to engage in a Business Development Network. As a result, Sarasota County has contracted with the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) of Sarasota County to lead this effort. The EDC is currently beginning the implementation phase of what it has now termed a "Venture Development Organization" (VDO). The VDO is proposed to serve clean tech and green tech and other emerging businesses already located in Sarasota County and those emerging businesses that may be attracted to the County due to the existence of the VDO. The project will establish business models to implement and integrate energy technologies and support an energy economy in Florida. Addressing business development needs will result in a sustainable competitive business advantage for Sarasota County.

Education and Outreach

GOVERNANCE

- Audubon International Green Community Award:** Sarasota County was the first community in Florida to earn the Audubon International Green Community Award. The award recognizes the County's commitment to local agriculture, the environment, conscientious planning, recreation, resource conservation and alternative and public transportation.
- Employee Sustainability Education:** Through programs entitled "Get Energy Smart" and "Sarasota County Green Champion," Sarasota County is educating and engaging employees in energy and sustainability efforts with a goal of spreading ownership of the issue and responsibility for solutions across the whole government enterprise. "Get Energy Smart" uses a multimedia campaign of posters, videos, websites and intranet sites to convey the implications of fuel use, wasted electricity, water use and air quality as they relate to energy and fiscal responsibility. The "Sarasota County Green Champion" program is a series of training classes with certification at the end that address general sustainability principles and policies, driving behaviors, sustainability at home and at work, social sustainability and health and wellness. Since its inception in June of 2009, there have been 64 Green Champion classes, serving 232 employees and resulting in 110 certified Green Champions. Together these education and training efforts are providing employees with information, engagement opportunities and a sense of responsibility in these critical issues.
- Florida Green Building Council Green Local Government Designation:** Sarasota County was certified in October of 2008 as a Green Local Government, earning the highest certification of any local government in the state, with a score that met the coalition's Gold level. The County was also selected as one of three model green Florida communities to help create state guidelines for that standard.

- **Sustainable Municipalities:** Provide guidance to local governments seeking to implement green initiatives and promote sustainability through Florida and National Associations of Counties. Over 20 Florida communities and several from other states have sought assistance from Sarasota County. Locally, the Cities of Sarasota, Venice, and North Port, as well as Charlotte and Lee Counties have engaged in partnerships with the County to meet mutual sustainability and community engagement goals, with joint events, shared resources, quarterly coordination meetings and community-wide planning initiatives.

COMMUNITY

- **4-H Youth Leadership and Development:** UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County's 4-H program focuses on science, citizenship, and healthy living, training youth to value responsibility, sustainability, and leadership.
- **Biomimicry:** Workshops have been held for the County Commission, wastewater treatment service providers, and for the general public. The EDC Life and Environmental Sciences Cluster has explored biomimicry applications as well.
- **Community Outreach Events:** Sarasota County participates in numerous community outreach events, providing educational materials and presentations to interested citizens on various subjects. Efest was an annual community sustainability festival created by the County and Friends of Sarasota County Parks in 2005, with a transition to private management from 2007-2008. Its mission was to celebrate and promote healthy living, sustainable economic and business development, and preservation of natural resources. Natural Awakenings EcoFest , Watershed Awareness Week and Oscar Scherer State Park Earth Day Celebration represent just some of the community events the County participates in regularly.
- **Economic Development Branding/Marketing:** "e-Newsletter - The Economic Development Team developed a weekly Business and Economic Development e-Newsletter to be emailed to interested parties. These newsletters feature upcoming Sarasota County Commission Topics, Commission Business Reports and Community News and Events.

Website and Brochure - The Economic Development Team is in the final stages of developing a marketing brochure and website, both of which will focus on the five key business sectors, including Sports & Ecotourism, Light Manufacturing, Life Sciences, Film & Entertainment and Clean Technology & Green Business. The website has a direct link on the main scgov.net site for easy and quick access.

- **Environmental Library:** The Ann Marbut Environmental Library, established in 1979, is now located in the Selby Public Library.
- **G.Wiz:** The Gulfcoast Wonder & Imagination Zone (GWIZ), under leadership of a new Board of Trustees and new CEO Sara Rankin Wilson, closed in September for a building, grounds, and exhibit renovation. Renewable energy remains a science and educational focus, FPL is working with GWIZ on a solar PV display on the grounds.

- **International Design Summit:** Conference hosted by Ringling College of Art and Design 2006-2010, focused on the role design occupies in global business strategy.
- **Master Gardener Program:** The UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County Master Gardener program trains volunteers to help households create and maintain Florida Friendly Landscapes that promote water quality and conservation. Master Gardener help desks are located at Twin Lakes Park, libraries, farmers markets, and garden stores.
- **Master Naturalist Program:** The Florida Master Naturalist Program is designed to provide participants an awareness, understanding and respect of Florida's ecological diversity. The Program prepares students for informed participation in community efforts to foster principles of sustainability, connectivity, and biodiversity.
- **Natural Capitalism:** In cooperation with the Economic Development Corporation, Sarasota County has hosted two Natural Capitalism workshops facilitated by the Rocky Mountain Institute, focused on creating an economic development strategy to implement Natural Capitalism in Sarasota County.
- **Nature Walks:** Parks Naturalists, Land Managers and volunteers provide nature walks and environmental education in parks, natural areas and at special events. These walks and events reached over 3,500 Sarasota residents and visitors in 2011 and 2012.
- **Neighborhood Environmental Stewardship Teams (NEST):** The NEST program provides resources, expertise and education to citizens and youth involved in neighborhood watershed improvement projects. The NEST program has helped over 50 communities establish their own neighborhood teams and complete watershed projects. Working in conjunction with the Ringling College of Art & Design and Sarasota Bay Estuary Program the NEST Program has installed 23 large decorated cistern/rain barrels at County buildings, libraries, parks, community gardens and other facilities to demonstrate and encourage rain water harvesting and water use. The County each year also produces a NEST calendar promoting watershed and environmental awareness featuring artwork from local elementary school children. In 2012 NEST participated in 52 citizen environmental education outreach meetings with HOA's, schools and others and is working on projects at the North Port Library, South Venice Civic Association, Pinecraft Park, among others. 13. Five NEST communities obtained grants from the Neighborhood Grant program to do stormwater pond water quality improvements in their ponds.
- **Outreach Materials:** Tools are regularly developed to facilitate public outreach on sustainability, including a video entitled "It's All About Choices," an education-focused Web site, and brochures outlining sustainability choices for local governments and the general public. In 2010, an intergenerational educational video highlighting outstanding community examples of sustainability in all sectors was produced entitled "Footsteps of Sustainability," as well as a public overview handout of sustainability best practices in Parks and Recreation.
- **Parks and Recreation Environmental, Specialty, and Day Camps:** Parks and Recreation staff provided environmental programming for children in our Sarasota County summer camp programs. They were taught by Parks Naturalists and by a

variety of professionals about nature and the environment. They went on field trips allowing the participants to explore and learn.

- **Rethinking Sustainable Construction 2006:** County hosted site for conference, featuring a design challenge for a Biological Field Station.
- **Sarasota Business Today:** Sarasota Business Today" features a review of local business news and focuses on county economic development initiatives and opportunities. The SBT profiles businesses creating jobs and boosting the local economy by expanding their operations or bringing their company to Sarasota County. These are monthly 30 minute shows.
- **Science and Environment Council of Sarasota County (SEC):** The SEC Board of Directors recently changed organization's name to Science and Environment Council of Southwest Florida to expand to Sarasota and Manatee Counties and adjacent watersheds. Sarasota County BCC declared March 10-17, 2012 as "Explore Sarasota's Water's Beyond the Beaches". SEC members participated with watershed related programs and events during "Explore Sarasota's Waters Beyond the Beaches ". County staff offered numerous free public programs and events. 2013 Water Awareness Project will cross-promote the theme of Watershed Awareness with the Be Floridian campaign. STEM educational collaborations remain a focus.
- **SCOPE Community Data and Report Cards:** SCOPE focused their 2007 Annual Community Report Card on Sustainability, including the Ecological Footprint analysis in the introduction. Additional indicators included accessibility of natural areas, water quality of local bays, and greenways. In 2011, SCOPE initiated the Community Data Collaborative project that is bringing community data stewards together to identify key indicators of community well being and to develop an online platform for showcasing that data.
- **Sustainability Month:** The Sarasota County Library System celebrated Sustainability Month during the month of April 2009 with an exciting lineup of cultural and educational events including a photography exhibition, urban forestry and red tide programs, seedling giveaways, recycling craft workshops, free SCAT passes, addition of "Kill-a-Watt" electric usage monitors to library circulation, and other sustainability outreach efforts. This series of events resulted in 40 programs reaching 857 participants.
- **Sustainable Communities Workshop:** 2011 Sustainable Communities workshop theme was "Investing in Our Future: Green Economic Pathways and Partnerships" with a focus on the green economy. Our 7th annual 2012 SCW workshop theme was "Innovation for the Future" and in collaboration with Sarasota Chamber of Commerce Green Business Leadership Council the Chamber had their 2nd annual Green Business Roundtable the evening before SCW offering a reduced rate to attend both events.
- **Sustainable Floridians:** Extension launched the new UF pilot program Sustainable Floridians, training 17 sustainability ambassadors to educate community members about practices that lead to a more resilient Florida.
- **Sustainable Sarasota Community Partnership Meeting:** Monthly forum that includes a speaker and attendee discussion. Remains a popular community engagement meeting

for businesses, organizations, and government representatives to network and share education and outreach opportunities to build a more sustainable community.

- **Sustainable Seafood Campaign:** In addition to distributing 1500 Southeast Seafood Watch Pocket Guides last year, we have added the new Seafood Watch Sushi Pocket Guide to community distribution. Sustainability offered a Seafood Watch workshop provided by Monterey Bay at Admin Center last year for public and restaurants. As a result we are collaborating with local restaurants on smart seafood choices. For example, Tommy Klauber, Polo Grill and Ed Chiles, Beachouse Restaurant offer menus showcasing local and sustainable seafood. We are working with Ringling College of Art & Design for a student project to promote sustainable seafood.
- **Urban Forestry Website:** Natural Resources hosts a community-based, full-service website that includes a variety of information about trees and palms, information on County tree ordinances, the natural capital benefits of urban canopy, model guidelines for development and homeowners, proper tree care and management, and teacher/student workshops. The Sarasota Tree Advisory Council has committed to improving the information available on the website in order to make it more comprehensive and interactive. These updates are under development.

Energy

GOVERNANCE

- **Athletic Field Lighting Energy Conservation Program:** Beginning in 1997, Parks and Recreation implemented automated athletic field lighting to achieve both energy conservation and elimination of excess photo pollution. From 2002 to 2009, 15 fields implemented the program with a reduced consumption of 25 percent. In Fiscal Year 2010, the lighting on an additional 7 outdoor sports fields were retrofitted. In addition, three community center gym lighting systems were replaced with induction technology for better lighting and longer life with a 45 percent reduction in energy use for each gym. All new facilities are being constructed with the latest technology and existing facilities are being retrofitted each year.
- **Embodied Energy:** New County facilities such as fire stations and parks are incorporating resource conserving initiatives such as daylight harvesting for natural lighting, Low Impact Development techniques such as cisterns to deliver water to the facility for non-potable purposes of toilet flushing and irrigation. Renewable energy initiatives include solar hot water and solar photovoltaic.
- **Energy Management Plan:** "The full Energy Management Action Plan including specific plans for each business unit is under development. An Executive Summary was presented to the Commission in 2008, setting goals of reducing County building electricity use and County fleet fuel use by 10 percent in the first year and a total of 20 percent over three years. Enterprise engagement strategies have been established through building-level Energy Ambassadors, a business unit level Energy Users Group and a management level Energy Management Team providing oversight. Energy use reduction objectives include conservation, efficiency improvements, use of renewable energy sources and employee education implemented with a campaign calling on employees to "Get Energy Smart," get certified as Green Champions and become a part

of the solution in saving energy. Building energy use goals will be determined utilizing benchmarked kbtu/sqft as defined by building type/use. "

- **ENERGY STAR:** Became a partner in 2004 after receiving the ENERGY STAR label for the Judicial Building, which was in the top 20 percent of energy efficient buildings in the U.S. In 2008, Sarasota County took the ENERGY STAR Challenge, and uses the Portfolio Manager to document energy use goal facilities. Enrolled in National Association of Counties (NACO) program to recognize "County's Successful Energy Efforts", by sharing Portfolio Manager data.
- **Facility Energy Conservation:** The County Energy Manager promotes energy efficiency in use and operation of County facilities through building automation control systems for AC and lights, efficient lighting and use of solar technologies.
 - 2011: federal stimulus funded retrofits included lighting retrofits at 17 buildings (est. savings \$18,000); storm windows at 9 facilities (est. savings \$22,000); energy conservation equipment installed on 28 vending machines (est. savings \$3,500); plug load reductions and comprehensive energy audits.
 - 2010: Lighting retrofits at the following buildings achieved the energy reductions indicated: Little BOB (35%), Northgate Records Bldg (35%), Mid-County Tax office (45%), Harts Landing Bait Shop (35%), Foxworthy Park restrooms (45%), Lido Beach restrooms and South Lido Nature Center (60%), North Jetty Shelter (35%). Rewiring is underway at the Health Department Building to install switches on 120 lights that are currently wired to constantly remain on and timers are being installed on additional specialty lighting that is also unable to turn off at the moment. In the Corrections Building, Facilities researched available lighting improvements that would still meet Federal Jail Regulations and has been changing hundreds of lamps throughout the facility for a 12% energy reduction. In the EDR room of the Carlton Water Plant (the size of a football field), all lighting was replaced for a 38% energy reduction. A new Building Automation System was installed at North Port Library. At the Twin Lakes Green Bldg., a variable frequency drive geothermal motor control was installed which now changes the motor's speed as the system calls for it and the solar water collector has been rejuvenated and installed at ground level reducing energy needed to heat water for the building and providing education for visiting citizens. In addition, the solar photovoltaic system has been refurbished and is now producing 60 amps of power or 8.5 KW's. LED retrofit lights are also currently being tested at the Administration Center's east parking lot, with a potential for 80% energy reduction per fixture and a lamp life of 10 years.
 - In 2009, insulation and window tinting were added at the Lemon Bay Park Environmental Center to reduce costs and increase the efficiency of the building. Windmills function at Urfer Family Park to water the cattle on the site, and at the T. Mabry Carlton Reserve to fill a pond used by equestrian park visitors, and more importantly, as a reservoir for firefighters in the event of a wildfire.
 - In 2008, Sarasota County took the ENERGY STAR Challenge, committing to reduce County building energy use by 10 percent and an additional 10 percent by 2011. Water conservation measures are also implemented as outlined above. These energy and water saving efforts are stipulated in the Construction Reference Manual for operation and maintenance specifications related to the design of new and retrofitted County facilities.

- In 2007, contracted with FPL for \$1.1 million in energy conservation measures. Implemented the Energy Manager system to track, monitor, and audit all electric accounts with projection of managing all other energy starting October 2008.
- **Facility Energy Reduction Goals:** In 2008, the Energy Management Action Plan set a goal of 20% reduction in energy use from 2005 levels. FY-11 Building electric energy use is down 8.84 percent since the base year of 2005, which resulted in an accumulated reduction of 7,964,485 kWh and \$718,782 in avoided cost. Billed cost per kWh from 2005-2011 increased 24.9%

Energy cost breakdown:

Electric, Natural Gas & Fuel Oil	54.9%	\$8,533,044
Fuels and Lubricants	29.3%	\$4,557,576
Water and Sewage	10.5%	\$1,632,121
Garbage	4.8%	\$742,029
Recycling	0.5%	\$70,972
TOTAL	100%	\$15,535,742

- **Landfill Gas:** The County advertised an RFP in September 2012 for proposals to be submitted for a LFGTE project at the Central County Landfill in Nokomis, Florida. The project would be designed, constructed and operated by a vendor with the County supplying the necessary gases to be converted to electricity. It is estimated that the amount of gas from the landfill that will be converted to energy will provide for approximately 2000 homes. The project is intended to be constructed by 2014.
- **Street Light Efficiency:** Street lights along Fruitville Road and Honore Avenue were installed using LED fixtures, providing better lighting and reduced energy and maintenance costs. There are currently 299 LED fixtures with an estimated savings of 40 to 60% over standard high pressure sodium lamps and a 12 year lifespan. The County is also planning to use LEDs on the new section of Cattlemen Rd. Additionally, the County has received grant funding to retrofit street lights on several corridors with LEDs, creating substantial energy saving and mitigating tons of emissions.
- **Traffic Signal Efficiency:** Traffic signals around the County have been replaced with high efficiency LED bulbs which saved over 65 percent in electricity costs and reduced maintenance requirements significantly due to longer bulb life.

COMMUNITY

- **Alternative Energy:** Sarasota County residents have demonstrated their commitment to renewable energy in the form of a flood of new solar installations. Between June 2011 and October 2012, Florida Power and Light has provided 102 solar photovoltaic rebates and 203 solar hot water rebates for new installations in Sarasota County. In 2011, 165 solar water heaters were installed through the Get Energy Smart Retrofit Program. In 2009, residents and businesses had requested state solar rebates for 402 solar pool heaters, 439 solar hot water heaters and 76 solar photovoltaic (PV) installations. The PV installations that were the subjects of those rebate applications total over 480kW of installed capacity in our community. All these installations have created jobs, increased our energy independence and reduced our greenhouse gas emissions locally.

- **Community Housing Rehabilitation:** One way is to eliminate the use of incandescent light bulbs and only use Energy Star fluorescent bulbs or fluorescent tubes. If home rehab projects require new appliances, it is required that Energy Star appliances be used as well as the installation of ceiling fans to decrease cooling costs. Additionally, the required SEER ratings on heat pumps was raised to 16 to promote energy efficiency, and if windows are replaced, they are Energy Star-rated, as well.
- **Energy Awareness Proclamation:** Sarasota County joins the U.S. Department of Energy in declaring October as National Energy Awareness Month, stating in a Board Proclamation that Americans need to reduce reliance on foreign energy sources with a reliable, continuous supply of affordable, environmentally friendly energy to enhance our national energy security, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and ensure an economically stable, clean energy future.
- **ENERGY STAR Change a Light, Change the World Campaign:** A national annual outreach program that asks individuals to take a pledge to do their part to reduce energy and replace one incandescent bulb with an ENERGY STAR compact fluorescent bulb (CFL). Since 2006, the County has distributed over 5,000 CFLs and received commitments from nearly 50 percent of County employees that have taken the ENERGY STAR Pledge. In 2006, the employee commitment represented the most of any participating community in the nation. In 2010, EPA recognized Sarasota County as a top Pledge Driver in the U.S. and the only local government in the top 5 participants in the government category. Pledges collected between 2009-2012, represent a potential \$2,140,957 in energy costs saved and 14,154,255 KWh reduced.
- **FPL Franchise Agreement:** Renegotiated in 2007 to ensure it does not preclude sustainability initiatives relative to energy.
- **FPL Solar Photovoltaic Installation:** Rothenbach Park is the host site for FPL's Sunshine Energy Program, with a 250 kW solar photovoltaic installation of 1,200 panels installed to feed the electric grid, enough electricity to power 55 average sized homes. In 2008, this site was dedicated and put into operation as the largest solar installation in Florida at the time, with the potential for future expansion.
- **Get Energy Smart Retrofit Program:** Sarasota County received \$2.5 million in Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) funding from the Department of Energy and worked in partnership with the Cities of Sarasota, Venice and North Port to implement the Get Energy Smart Retrofit Program with the majority of those funds. This home energy retrofit incentive program provided local homeowners with free do-it-yourself energy saving kits, rebates on numerous categories of energy improvements and a low income loan to help with the upfront costs of these improvements. The program launched on August 6, 2010 and ran through February 10, 2012. The program reached 2,239 households. Residents received \$1.3 Million in rebates for home energy improvements and the program injected \$8.9 million into the local economy, creating 92 jobs.
- **Hydrogen Fuel Cell School Demonstration Project and Education Program:** The Florida Department of Environmental Protection, US Department of Energy, and FPL monitored the performance of North Port High School fuel cell for one year. Fuel cell was

decommissioned at end of State grant cycle. State has not identified any additional fuel cell/hydrogen funding opportunities since. DOE continues to provide hydrogen curriculum to interested schools nationally.

- **Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP):** In order to ensure that the foreclosed homes that are resold through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program are as sustainable as possible, both demonstration projects and policy changes have been implemented. Department of Energy's (DOE) Building America program provided technical assistance and audits on a portion of the County purchased homes to identify the most cost effective energy saving retrofit strategies available. The first completed home went from a Home Energy Rating System (HERS) Index of 100 to 66, with an estimated annual energy savings of \$549 or 36 percent. This NSP home was showcased in a DOE case study as a "Deep Energy Retrofit" prototype and was also the first NSP house in Florida to achieve Florida Water Star certification. Sarasota County also adopted NSP retrofit standards that require much greater energy and water efficiency and indoor air quality improvements than is mandated by the federal government as a part of the program. NSP has received grants in the amount of \$23 million from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to purchase foreclosed homes to be remodeled as affordable workforce housing.
- **Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT):** SCAT regularly reviews system performance and seeks to improve its routes and add services. In 2011, SCAT initiated an Express bus route offering convenient, limited stop service between North Port and Sarasota. SCAT purchased Gillig Suburban vehicles that operate on clean diesel meeting all federal EPA requirements. A new Express route operating between North Port, Venice and Sarasota is scheduled to start in early 2013. A new Park and Ride lot in North Port for the Express routes is expected to open with the expanded Express services.
- **Sarasota County as a Center for Innovation in Energy and Sustainability:** Sarasota County received a grant from the Department of Energy to develop itself as a Center for Innovation in Energy and Sustainability. As a part of that grant, a consultant was engaged to develop a sustainable economic development strategy for this community. In addition, the grant funded a solar PV installation at the Sarasota County Government Complex, initiation of a Business Development Network, research on the Energy Economic Zone, among other things.
- **Solar Hot Water Task Force:** The Sarasota County Openly Plans for Excellence (SCOPE) Summit for Environmental Action and follow up committee identified solar hot water technology as a community priority and set forth recommendations on a way forward. In response, the Commission created the Solar Hot Water Task Force, where citizen and business representatives deliberated on what the County's role should be in promoting the technology locally. The solar industry was very engaged in the process and the ultimate recommendation was presented to the Commission on April 14, 2009. The discussion resulted in a recommendation to staff that partnerships be developed around education and that resident-owned solar thermal systems be encouraged. Those partnerships continue to be explored and solar thermal was an element of the Get Energy Smart Retrofit Program.

- **United States Department of Energy (USDOE) Rebuild America:** As part of federal budget reductions, USDOE eliminated all program funding for the Rebuild America Program.

Green Building/Development

GOVERNANCE

- **Buchan Airport Community Park:** The Englewood Center for Sustainability is currently utilizing the deltec buildings at the park site. They offer a variety of educational programs on sustainability.
- **County Green Buildings:** 2005 Resolution commits the County to build and renovate all County buildings to a green building standard (first county in the state) and the 2030 Challenge resolution includes a current goal of 60 percent reductions in fossil fuel emissions for new buildings (First county in the nation). First Florida local government to gain LEED building certification. In 2005, the Board committed that all new construction and major renovations would meet USGBC LEED or FGBC Commercial green building standards (first county in the state). In 2006, the Board adopted the American Institute of Architects 2030 Challenge to design and construct new buildings to be carbon neutral by 2030, with interim efficiency targets currently set at 60% (first county in the nation).

As of 2012, Sarasota County currently has 7 LEED Certified buildings: Twin Lakes County Extension, North Sarasota Library, EB Wilson House/Urfer Family Park, Fire Stations #1, #3, #10, and #15. The North Port Health Center is complete and has submitted for LEED certification. Gulf Gate Library and Emergency Operations Center are in design stages and are LEED registered. All RFPs and construction design documents reference these requirements for future buildings. Urfer Family Park included adaptive reuse of the historic C.B. Wilson home, and reuse and repurposing of on-site materials. A total systems approach also included Low Impact Development stormwater design, reduction of heat island effect, water efficient landscaping, and indoor environmental quality features such as low-emitting materials, controllability of systems, increased ventilation, daylight and views.

- **Green Roofs:** The Caspersen Beach restroom project was completed in 2012. The project did not include a cistern however the 1300 square foot roof is a green roof planted with salt tolerant native Muhly Grass.
- **Lime Lake Park:** Lime Lake Park opened in 2011. The site was transformed from a County stormwater pond into a true community asset through a partnership between the Sarasota County School Board, Stormwater, Neighborhood Services, Parks and Recreation, and the North County Community Organization.
- **Recycled Building Products:** Beginning in 2002, Parks and Recreation implemented the use of recycled and least toxic building materials available at the time. Projects have included: removal of arsenic treated lumber from all playgrounds and the utilization of recycled building products for boardwalk decking, and handrails, trash and recycle receptacles, and beach boardwalks and walkovers. Parks and Recreation pioneered the use of borate lumber in place of arsenic treated lumber. The utilization of these alternative building products has multiple positive outcomes: the alternative products

last longer, do not splinter (safer), and reduce release of toxins into the environment where cutting work takes place in the field.

- **Sarasota County Health Department Facilities Improvements:** SCHD has made improvement to lessen energy consumption with the purchase of LED lights, faucet aerators, low flow urinals, light timers and motion sensors. Additionally, sprinkler use has been discontinued with the installation of Florida Friendly plants and landscaping. Also, sub-compact and compact fuel efficient vehicles have been purchased.

COMMUNITY

- **Expediting Green Building and Development:** First known County to pass Green Development ordinance. Second Florida County to pass Green Building incentive program for private builders.
- **Florida House Learning Center:** On July 10, 2012, the BCC adopted Resolution 2012-122, authorizing execution of Contract 2012-420, a Sublease Agreement, with the Florida House Foundation of Sarasota, Inc. for operating and maintaining the Florida House for a five-year term with the option to extend the agreement for an additional 5-year term. The Foundation shall promote sustainability by offering educational classes and seminars to the public and shall open the Florida House as a center to demonstrate sustainability practices.
- **Private/Community Green Building:**
 - Home Builders Association Sarasota-Manatee has an active Green Building Council.
 - Sarasota Association of Realtors has an active Green Realtors Alliance:
 - Sustainability staff serves on the Board of our USGBC Florida Gulf Coast Chapter Myakka River Branch and LEED for Homes Committee.
 - Sustainability staff serve on the FGBC Local Government and Homes Committees:
 - Green buildings in Sarasota County as of July 2012;
 - 22 LEED certified private sector commercial buildings
 - 13 LEED certified public sector commercial buildings
 - 11 LEED certified homes
 - 330 FGBC certified homes
 - 70 LEED registered homes and commercial buildings
- **Renewable Community Partnership Demonstration Project:** Plug-in electric vehicles are available however, perhaps because of the housing industry decline in our State, a development of all zero energy homes has yet to be planned in Sarasota County. Builder Josh Wynne, Josh Wynne Construction, designed and built the first zero energy home for a Sarasota County client. This zero energy home home, the PowerHaus, generates more power annually than the home consumes. PowerHaus achieved a Home Energy Rating System index score of minus 22, the lowest ever recorded by ENERGY STAR and the US Dept. of Energy's Builders Challenge. This is the highest scoring LEED Platinum home in the US and is also Florida Water Star Gold certified. 2011 national building recognition of the PowerHaus includes USGBC LEED Outstanding Single Family Home of the Year, EcoHome Design Award, Design Excellence Award by Residential + Design Build Magazine, and Best in American Living Award from National Association of Home Builders. 2011 State recognition includes USGBC Florida Gulf Coast Chapter Outstanding Project of the Year, 4 Grand Aurora Awards and 8 Aurora

Awards from the Florida Home Builders Association. 2012 Best Home of the Year, Best Kitchen, and Best Overall Home under 2 Million Gold Awards from SRQ Magazine.

- **Rothenbach Park:** This park was developed on the site of a capped landfill- a great example of recycling on a grand scale. The pavilion, playground equipment, and picnic tables are made from recycled materials. The playground structure is made of post-consumer recycled plastic milk jugs that are PVC-free, Fiberglass-free, water impermeable, non-degradable and inedible to insects.

Health, Safety and Community Services

GOVERNANCE

- **Above Ground Fuel Tanks:** Fleet procured 2 above ground fuel tanks providing an additional 10,500 gallons of gasoline and 10,500 of diesel for contingencies and daily operations. An underground gasoline tank was also converted to diesel which provided an additional capacity of 13,500 gallons of diesel which is the most utilized fuel. These changes were at Fleet's Pinkney fuel site where the biggest users are SCAT and EMS.
- **Employee Health Policies:** Sarasota County promotes employee health as a part of its sustainable workforce efforts. Access to 100% covered preventive care, generic drug utilization cost savings, comprehensive disease management programs with benefit and cost analysis, incentives for healthy lifestyles, on-site fitness centers with exercise classes and employee health education are the key components. Examples include a "Bike to Work" incentive, a pedometer program that encourages people to find opportunities to walk rather than drive throughout their day, free access to a personal trainer to get motivated about exercise, nutrition counseling, County-wide influenza clinics and a smoking cessation initiative, including a support clinic and cash incentive.
- **Employee Safety Committees:** Sarasota County employee safety committees develop programs that help prevent job-related accidents, injuries, and illnesses. The purpose of these committees is to develop, monitor and sustain a culture that promotes safety, good health and environmental management in the organization and community.
- **Tobacco-Free Hiring Policy:** Sarasota County enacted a tobacco-free hiring policy for its new employees in April 2008. The County also provides support for its existing employees to help them quit tobacco use. A Tobacco-Free Campus Policy has also been implemented on County facilities.

COMMUNITY

- **Asbestos Mitigation:** In 2011 over 330,000 square feet of asbestos containing materials were removed and properly disposed during building renovations and demolitions. Proper management of asbestos during construction projects ensures that our community health and wellbeing is protected from this hazardous airborne pollutant.
- **Civility Code:** Sets forth the expected nature of public discourse, accommodating, and demanding respect for the diverse opinions that serve the democratic ideal of human dignity in public discourse.

- **Community Alliance of Sarasota County:** A 62 member organization comprised of funders, community service providers, and representatives from the business sector, faith-based community and consumers. Their mission is to advance communication, collaboration and advocacy of the health and human service needs of all citizens in Sarasota County through more integrated, effective and efficient delivery systems. Committees of the Community Alliance include the Behavioral Health Stakeholders' Consortium, the Aging Stakeholders' Consortium, the Developmental Disabilities Committee, the Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD), the Legislative Advocacy Committee, the Nominating and Membership Committee and the Sarasota Partnership for Children Committee.
- **Community Alternative Residential Treatment Initiative (CART):** A three phase continuum of intervention services that requires the active collaboration of several agencies providing services in their individual areas of expertise. Phase 1 created a 30-bed secure adult addictions receiving facility to provide medically supervised detoxification, evaluation, and assessment services. Phase 2 created a 10-week residential treatment program at The Salvation Army based on an existing program with limited programming-increased capacity to 30 treatment beds and 15 pre-treatment beds serving people who are homeless and jobless when entering the program. Phase 3 expanded transitional housing to provide continued support and stabilization for re-entry into the community following residential treatment. Since the inception of the CART Initiative, the VIP-ER Program has served 1,052 clients with a 77% completion rate. 65% of participants to date who successfully completed the program were sober after one year. The ARF has served 11,819 clients- 6,158 were involuntary and would have been transported to the jail if the addictions receiving facility was not established.
- **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT):** Locally implemented federal program to teach basic first aid, fire suppression and search and rescue skills to volunteer teams enabling citizens to provide initial response in their neighborhoods following emergencies.
- **Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP):** CHIP continues to support grassroots "Community Health Action Teams" (CHATs) as well as a regional, 4-County health care leadership collaborative. In 2011, the North Port CHAT initiated the Drug-Free Youth (D-Fy) initiative, a community-based program which rewards youth for their commitment to stay drug-free. More than 1,400 youth have become members and this evidence-based program is expanding to other parts of the County. In 2011, CHIP supported the launch of the SafeRx Campaign. In 2012, CHIP facilitated the development of a Community Health Improvement Plan.
- **Community Health Survey:** Every three to four years, CHIP administers a County-wide survey to assess critical metrics of local community health. The third installment of was completed in 2010 and the data have been used to identify health issues of priority to Sarasota County residents.
- **Community Organizations Active in Disasters:** A subcommittee of the Community Alliance which addresses community disaster preparedness, response and recovery efforts. Strike Teams have been established for the following systems: Behavioral Health; Elder Care; Developmental Disabilities; Homeless; Youth and Families; and, Volunteers and Donations.

- **Community Outcomes Assessment:** Staff is developing a Community Outcomes Assessment tool that will allow decision makers to consider the health, social, financial, and environmental aspects of ordinances and large scale planning processes.
- **County Veteran Services:** County Veteran Services unit provides assistance to veterans and their families with filing claims for veterans benefits. Benefits include compensation for service related disabilities, medical benefits, pension for wartime veterans with non-service related disabilities, survivor benefits, and death benefits. In 2011, County Veteran Services had over \$20 million in new revenue to the County Veteran population. We also had over 1,300 outreach contacts.
- **Criminal Justice Commission:** A 10 member committee composed of Chief Judge, a County Commissioner, Sheriff, State Attorney, Public Defender, Clerk of Court, Court Administrator, Deputy County Administrator, Executive Director of Health and Human Services and Department of Corrections Circuit Administrator. The mission is to examine, evaluate, and coordinate all aspects of the criminal justice system in Sarasota County by working collaboratively with the Commission to maximize efficiencies.
- **Detention Facilities Planning:** A number of Work Groups of the Criminal Justice Commission are working to address facility capacity issues, with the primary focus on decreasing future facility demands by reducing the rate of return offenders utilizing evidence-based programming.
- **Disaster Preparedness Education Program:** Make regular presentations to community groups on emergency preparedness, disaster planning, how to pick hurricane shutters and many other topics. Community outreach materials include the Hurricane Guides, Disaster Planning Guide and Disaster Kit preparation materials. The Hurricane Guide has been adjusted to serve for multiple years to avoid reprinting when not necessary.
- **Emergency Prevention and Code Enforcement:** Emergency Services has focused on public education and code enforcement with a goal to reduce and/or prevent emergencies from happening. They have also moved to address our false alarms, with fire inspector visits to the site of a fire alarm to determine the cause and help the customer with their system. They provide them with the knowledge of how to reduce unwanted false alarms from their system.
- **Enhanced Community Health:** Promotes better community health through prevention activities; education and training; environmental and public health interventions and increased access to personal healthcare.
- **Family Nutrition Program:** UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County administers the local Family Nutrition Program, the Florida component of the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). It is a partnership between USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, Florida Department of Children and Families, UF/IFAS, and Sarasota County Extension.
- **Family Safety Alliance:** Established to provide community oversight, guidance and direction in the achievement of systemic improvements in community-based child welfare services in the 12th Judicial Circuit. A Systems Advocate position was created

(and funded jointly by Manatee and Sarasota counties) to act as a liaison between the Family Safety Alliance, the community, and community-based care providers to monitor the delivery of the child welfare services.

- **Foreclosure Resource Assistance Network:** Responding to significant community need, the County provides services to citizens at risk of foreclosure, including online resources and “Hope for Homeowners” seminars.
- **GPS Traffic Preemption:** Beginning in 2013 GPS receivers will be installed in 195 intersection control boxes throughout the county. All response units will have a GPS transmitter installed and will send GPS data to the control boxes, giving the responding units priority through the intersection. This will reduce wear and tear on emergency vehicles and allow for a more efficient response of units.
- **Health Impact Assessments:** Addresses correlation between the built environment and public health concerns like physical inactivity, pedestrian safety, and air and water quality. The County is partnering with the local health department to develop this capability.
- **Healthy Weight Collaborative:** In 2011, a team led by CHIP was selected as just one of 10 groups in the nation to participate in the Healthy Weight Collaborative, a federal initiative which aims to accelerate progress toward community-wide healthy weight and health equity. The team is working to advance the “Healthy Sarasota County” brand. 5210 Every Day! is the core message under the Healthy Sarasota County brand (www.healthysarasota.com). 5210 aims to reinforce the importance of healthy eating and active living for children and families. Through targeted trainings and programming, the message has been applied across multiple sectors – child care, schools, clinics, workplaces - with the ultimate goal of establishing policies and environments that support healthy choices.
- **Human Services Programs:** Sarasota County contracted with more than 80 programs for approximately \$9 million in FY12 to provide high quality human services programs and support to the people in need in the community. This includes funding from Sarasota County Government as well as federal and state funding, all managed by human services staff. Some of the significant results that program has achieved include: Over 180,000 residents have received services through the program, with a 97% satisfaction rate; Emergency food assistance was provided to 10,459 people; 97% of children served in funded programs were ready for Kindergarten; 100% of babies served in the Mothers and Infants program were born alcohol and drug free; 96% of youth with substance abuse charges were not re-arrested during the six months following intervention and prevention services.
- **Immediate Disaster Response Teams:** Internally within Sarasota County Government, the eRole employee registration system ensures staff are assigned to specific roles in advance of an emergency and are trained on critical responsibilities following a disaster such as damage assessment and neighborhood points of distribution (NPOD) for distributing food & water. Staff also facilitate Tactical First In Teams, cross-disciplinary teams who are responsible for clearing paths on critical routes such as to emergency facilities immediately following an emergency. These teams include law enforcement, fire, search and rescue, FPL and equipment operators.

- **Neighborhood Parklands Program:** The Neighborhood Parklands Program was voter-approved in 2005. This acquisition program provides for the purchase of lands allowing public access (especially along the water) to lands with natural features, cultural or community benefit.
- **Parks and Recreation Athletics Programs:** Parks and Recreation provides facilities for community athletic activities and recreation. These facilities host classes, programs and special events such as the Senior Games and Summer Beach Runs to encourage an active, healthy community.
- **Parks and Recreation Universal Access Fitness Equipment:** Outdoor recreation fitness equipment designed for users of all abilities is installed at Urfer Family Park, including stations for prevention of osteoporosis, accessibility for sight and mobility-impaired users. Bike helmet fittings were provided at several community events for injury prevention.
- **Pathways to Health Program (PTH):** PTH engages in innovative projects addressing individual behavior and environmental changes to increase opportunities for Sarasota County residents to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives. PTH projects include creating and enhancing walking paths, creating community walking maps and providing walking programs.
- **People With Special Needs:** Maintain a registry of medically dependent individuals that are not in an assisted living facility or nursing home in order to ensure a system is in place to house them in emergency shelters staffed with nurses and appropriate medical equipment. There are currently around 3,000 registrants. The registry won ICMA IAEM and NACo awards for transitioning to a web-based database that allows real-time data tracking and monitoring. Emergency Management staff also annually review the emergency plans for hospitals, assisted living facilities and nursing homes.
- **Pharmaceutical Diversion:** In September 2010, the Sarasota County Sheriff's Department established permanent pharmaceutical drop boxes to give citizens the opportunity to anonymously turn in controlled substances and unused or expired prescription medications year-round. They are located in the Criminal Justice Center in downtown Sarasota and in the south county Sheriff's office in Venice. Collection events have also been held in partnership with Operation Medicine Cabinet and the National Take-Back Initiative, raising the profile of the importance of proper disposal of pharmaceuticals. These initiatives are part of the Pharmaceutical Diversion Investigative Unit of the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office. In 2011 and 2012, drop boxes were added at the North Port Police Department and the Venice Police Department.
- **Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan:** Sarasota County launched a two-year effort from 2008 to 2010 to develop a draft Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan (PDRP). To accomplish this ambitious undertaking, a Stakeholder Working Group was convened, consisting of a broad array of County staff, community leaders, barrier island residents, representatives of the local municipalities, and other coastal stakeholders. The draft chapters lay out some solid pre- and post-disaster action plans, to help prepare Sarasota for redevelopment following a catastrophic event, with the goal of optimizing resiliency. However, the draft is still lacking some specificity in a few key areas.

Consequently, the next steps will be to finalize the draft chapters where needed, to bring a final version of the PDRP to the County Commission for adoption. To help facilitate the public meetings that will be needed to accomplish this goal, the County teamed with Florida Sea Grant to successfully obtain a grant for an innovative visualization tool that combines a Nintendo Wii controller and GIS technologies. The tool is known as Coastal CHARM, an acronym that stands for Community Health and Resource Management. It projects a virtual tabletop, where County officials and community representatives can simultaneously view and interact with map layers over aerial images of Sarasota County. The map layers can illustrate a wide range of information, such as census data, utility infrastructure, flood zones, and storm surge scenarios, which will greatly facilitate PDRP discussions – for both the sub-group meetings and the subsequent broader public workshops. It will enable groups to explore real-time “what if” scenarios right at the meeting table, promoting more meaningful dialogue on challenging resource issues.

- **Response Data:** The Fire Department reports response data and statistics to many other agencies for comparative benchmarking purposes. Efforts are underway on a system that will have all of data in a central program. This program will give live updates of response times so we can be proactive and address issues as they arise.
- **Safe Rx Initiative:** A doctor education program that has trained local doctors about prescription drug misuse, encouraged doctors to sign up for the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (EFORCSE) and share safe disposal information with patients. 500 medical professionals have been trained to date.
- **Sarasota Healthcare Access (SHCA):** Access to quality affordable healthcare is a cornerstone of community sustainability. SHCA helps individuals who do not have a "medical home" find affordable preventive and primary health care. Low-income, Medicaid-eligible or uninsured individuals who have been to the ER with a minor illness or hospitalized with a chronic medical condition are referred to a SHCA case manager who helps. The case manager helps with eligibility for services and access to medical care, dental services and medications. A Registered Nurse makes education and support available for those with ongoing health problems to help them manage their disease. SHCA services are based at the Ringling and North Port Health Center sites. In FY12, almost 2,000 individuals were referred to SHCA.
- **Sarasota Partnership for Children’s Mental Health:** A coalition of agencies, programs and families working together to ensure a collaborative, community-based, culturally competent, family-driven, and developmentally-appropriate approach to meeting the social-emotional and mental health needs of young children and families. Funding for this grant ended 9/30/2012.
- **SCAT Bus Stop Accessibility:** Bus stop improvements provide for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) bus passenger deployment areas and, where possible, benches and covered seating areas. The County funds bus stop improvements with local sales tax options to match state and federal revenues for these community improvements. In 2012, SCAT will complete construction of 13 bus shelters in North Port. In 2012, a shelter installation contract is being advertised so that SCAT can install approximately 22 shelters and benches at bus stops where pads are already constructed including bus stops in the City of Sarasota and City of Venice.

- **School-Shelter Collaboration:** Work in partnership with Sarasota County Schools to ensure adequate emergency shelter facilities in new school construction. The School Board also applied for and received a grant for solar systems on the emergency shelters at Atwater Elementary and Pine View School, providing renewable and off-grid electricity in the event of an emergency.
- **Smoke Free Beaches:** Sarasota County has adopted a Smoke Free Beaches ordinance. Educational signage and cigarette butt receptacles are placed at beach walkovers and access points, as well as in pavilions and picnic areas. Designated smoking areas are identified in parking lots and other specified areas, but there is no smoking allowed on the sandy beaches. This reduces litter from cigarette butts, historically one of the most prevalent forms of litter on the beaches.
- **Students Working Against Tobacco:** Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) is Florida's statewide youth organization to mobilize, educate, and equip Florida youth to revolt against and de-glamorize Big Tobacco. We are a united movement of Florida empowered youth working toward a tobacco free future. The Sarasota County SWAT Chapter consists of 10 individual clubs with over 150 youth from community organizations, middle schools, and high schools throughout Sarasota County. SWAT youth are working to change policies regarding candy flavored tobacco products, tobacco retail advertising, and tobacco use on school campuses.
- **Tobacco Free Partnership of Sarasota County:** Established to empower and mobilize communities to reduce tobacco-related death and disease throughout Sarasota County. This partnership is composed of adults and youth committed to a healthier Sarasota County. The public and private sectors are represented, and the group will work to decrease exposure to second-hand smoke, eliminate the initiation of tobacco use, especially among youth, to reduce tobacco availability, to counter pro-tobacco influences, to educate the public on all health issues related to tobacco, and to advocate for positive reform and tobacco free zones throughout Sarasota County.
- **Traffic Safety:** Many practices are implemented to improve safety on County roadways. Roadway lighting is provided at signalized intersections where feasible to enhance visibility of the intersection at night. All signal faces have visors to aid in directing the signal indication specifically to the approaching traffic, as well as to reduce "sun phantom" which can result when external light enters the lens. We continue to install internally illuminated and retro-reflective overhead street name signs with 9 inch, capital letters at signalized intersections to increase visibility at night. We have installed Tapco Blinker signs in problem areas where warranted. These blinker signs have LED units within the border of the sign that improves conspicuity in an energy efficient way.
- **Transportation Accessibility Upgrades:** Accessibility improvements are being made in many of the County's existing transportation improvement projects and where specific needs are indicated. From a new ramp for crossing a draw bridge to installing audible pedestrian crossing signals, projects are providing opportunities for persons with disabilities to have easier access to the entire transportation network.

Natural Environment

COMMUNITY

- **Air and Water Quality:** Pollution prevention programs include efforts to ensure that our drinking water resources are not adversely impacted by petroleum storage systems and that surface water and ground water are protected from unauthorized discharges. Air quality ensures the protection of our community from pollutants associated with commercial and industrial facilities including asbestos emissions during building renovation and demolition projects.
- **Artificial Reef Program:** Established in 1985 to increase and enhance recreational fishing and scuba diving areas and to create and restore marine habitat lost to coastal development.
- **Beach and Inlet Management Program:** Following development of individual conceptual beach nourishment plans for each of the barrier islands, the County partnered with Charlotte County in 1999 to combine efforts and apply for state funding for a Beach Feasibility Study that would encompass the entire Gulf shoreline of both counties. That study was undertaken and completed in 2002, laying the foundation for on-going beach and inlet management in Sarasota County. The first application of this study was the South Siesta Key Beach Nourishment project, which was successfully completed in 2007.
- **Canopy Road Program:** 2001 ordinance designates preserves and protects canopy roads and encourages property owners to maintain and protect these trees. In 2012, this policy was integrated into the Tree Protection and Management Code.
- **Coastal Setback Code:** Prohibits development proposals along the Gulf of Mexico and Big Pass to protect coastal native habitats, the fragile coastal environment, and the public's health, safety and welfare by limiting construction in the coastal high hazard area. The Coastal Setback Code was revised in 2008 for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan EAR based amendments and to improve how the code functions.
- **Environmentally Sensitive Lands Protection Program:** Voter-approved land acquisition program has preserved over 35,000 acres of environmentally sensitive lands. Management program protects the preserves through ecosystem restoration, including prescribed burning, wildlife monitoring, and other land management techniques in accordance with the Land Management Master Plan adopted in 2004. Over the last two years acquiring nine acres on three identified environmentally sensitive land priority sites has created opportunities for scrub and manatee habitat restoration. In addition, an east - west wildlife and recreational corridor is underway with a potential connection in North Port.
- **Exotic Reptile Management Program:** The County has developed an Exotic Reptile Management Program (ERMP) to address the emerging threat of exotic reptiles (e.g. iguanas, monitors, pythons, etc.) in our community. This plan has been developed to

proactively identify opportunities to manage exotic reptiles in order to protect native habitats, plants and animals and to prevent a public nuisance.

- **Habitat Enhancement/ Restoration:** Many Sarasota County natural areas, parks and beaches were targeted for nuisance invasive plant and animal removal, and habitat enhancement/restoration. Successful partnerships with the community resulted in native, drought tolerant plantings, and creation of wildlife forage areas.
- **Habitat Preservation:** The County has historically identified the protection of native habitats as a community priority. The Comprehensive Plan contains principles for evaluating development proposals in native habitats. Through the implementation of the Land Development Regulations and other ordinances administered by Natural Resources, environmentally sensitive coastal, wetland, and upland native habitats are preserved during the development review process. The protection of these habitats ensures functional ecosystems and maintains a high quality of life.
- **Leave No Trace / Pack In Pack Out:** Rothenbach Park, Urfer Park, and all County beaches became “leave no trace / pack in pack out” parks. Trash and recycle cans are centrally located, and signage asks park visitors to pack trash out and place in appropriate trash and recycling receptacles. Trash cans were moved off of the open sandy beach and placed at beach accesses, picnic pavilions and parking lots thus reducing on-beach traffic from maintenance vehicles. This cuts fuel costs, but also preserves and protects valuable habitat for nesting shorebirds and marine turtles, many of which are threatened or endangered species.
- **Manatee Protection:** The County is a priority protection site in Florida for the endangered manatee and has adopted a Manatee Protection Plan and Implementation Code designed to reduce detrimental human-related impacts to manatees. The MPP provides standards for new boat facilities (e.g., boat ramps, marinas, etc.) to provide recreational access to the waterways while protecting the manatee. The Manatee Protection Plan was originally adopted in 2003, and updated in October, 2011.
- **Myakka River Wild and Scenic Protection Zone:** Created in 2003, the Myakka River Protection Zone standards are intended to provide protection for the Myakka River in Sarasota County and maintain the wild and scenic nature of the river. These standards were consolidated and updated in 2007 to make them more “livable” while still providing the necessary protection.
- **Petroleum Clean Up:** In 2011 cleanups were managed at 90 petroleum contaminated sites. Through active remediation 4555 tons of soils were cleaned and over 4000 pounds of petroleum contaminants were removed from the groundwater. Fourteen sites were fully restored to conditions that are considered safe for the public and environment. Since 2001 over 65,000 tons of soils were cleaned and over 150,000 pounds of petroleum contaminants were removed from the groundwater at petroleum contaminated sites. During this timeframe 209 contaminated sites were restored to conditions that are considered safe for the public and environment bringing these properties back to their full economic potential.

- **Scrub-jay Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP):** In 2009, Sarasota County committed to implementing the biological goals of the draft Habitat Conservation Plan for the Florida Scrub-jay.
- **Sea Turtle Protection Program:** Created in 1997 to help protect sea turtles and their nesting habitat, this program includes education on sea turtle biology and coastal habitats, enforcement of the Marine Turtle Protection Code, nest monitoring, and volunteer coordination. In 2004, the Marine Turtle Protection Code was amended to increase habitat protection by requiring the nightly removal of beach furniture and other temporary structures that create obstacles to nesting and hatchling sea turtles.
- **Spoil Island Restoration:** The County initiated a multi-year effort with the Army Corps of Engineers to develop a Sarasota Bay Spoil Island Restoration feasibility study. Six specific sites were included in the study, from which the Commission selected three sites for primary focus: Bird Colony Islands Restoration, Palmer Point Park and Jim Neville Marine Preserve. Despite diverted federal funding, the County secured SWFWMD grant funds to move the program forward with assistance from the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program. To date, the Bird Colony Islands project has been successfully completed, and the design/permitting phase has been initiated for the Palmer Point Park project.
- **Transfer of Development Rights:** Natural Resources and Planning Services of the Community Planning Group have been working with the Board of County Commissioners on the Comprehensive Plan Sarasota 2050 policy component's Resource Management Area (RMA) system, which forms the basis for the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program. The primary goal of Sarasota 2050 policy is to enhance the livability of the county by preserving its natural, cultural, and physical resources. The RMA system created six unique areas of the county and established policy that addresses the unique development issues within them. Those RMAs are the 'Urban/Suburban', 'Economic Development', 'Rural heritage/Estate', 'Village/Open Space', 'Greenway', and 'Agricultural Reserve'. Within this system, the TDR Program serves as the mechanism through which environmentally sensitive lands are preserved concurrent with sustainable-type development in the 'Village/Open Space' RMA. Specifically, the staff has been assisting the Board of County Commissioners with their deliberations on developing a methodology that will set a value for publicly owned TDRs that may be purchased from Sarasota County as part of the Sarasota 2050 TDR Program.
- **Tree Protection:** Reviews and issues tree permits for tree removal, plantings, new construction, Canopy Roads and Grand Trees to promote a healthy and sustainable canopy.
- **Water and Navigation Control Authority (WNCA) :** Reviews coastal development proposals (e.g. docks, dredges, shoreline protection structures, etc.) in our local bays, creeks, streams, canals, etc. to protect coastal native habitats, water quality, navigation, and the public's health, safety and welfare. The WNCA Code was revised in 2007 for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan EAR based amendments and to improve how the code functions.
- **Wildlife Protection:** The County has historically identified wildlife protection as a community priority. To date, specific objectives and policies have been included in the

Comprehensive Plan regarding wildlife protection and have adopted several existing ordinances including the Manatee Protection Plan and the Marine Turtle Protection Code.

Planning and Policies

GOVERNANCE

- **Awards and Recognition:** Certified as a Gold Level Green Local Government by the Florida Green Building Coalition at the highest point level of any local government thus far. U.S. Chamber of Commerce Business Civic Leadership Center Sustainable Community Award Honoree in 2009. Received 2009 Achievement Awards by the National Association of Counties for efforts in local food system development; engaging the community in the conversation around fertilizer regulation and nutrient management; people with special needs evacuation program; Green Business Partnership; Web and map-based communication of capital improvement projects; Volunteer Seagrass Survey Program; and the Mercury Disposal Outreach Program. First recipient of the Florida Energy Achievement Award in 2005 recognizing significant achievement in the efficient utilization of energy, energy conservation, energy education or renewable energy in the state of Florida. Recognized in 2010 as a top ENERGY STAR Change the World Pledge Driver by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- **Roadmap to Sustainability:** October 2006 document outlining a plan to comprehensively transition to a sustainable community and government. Won award for Outstanding Achievement in Innovation from the Alliance for Innovation in 2007.

COMMUNITY

- **2050 Plan:** Smart growth planning effort to accommodate expected growth in a compact master planned form, preserving tens of thousands of acres of open space (primarily east of Interstate 75, outside of the Urban Service Boundary) and focusing on the revitalization of existing urban commercial centers into mixed-use activity centers.
- **Community Development:** UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County is supporting community placemaking and planning with events including a major symposium on Florida growth management policy, the Basics to Big Picture: Land Use Planning 101 website, and support for county planning efforts using through community engagement facilitation and CommunityViz interactive geographic information systems assistance.
- **Comprehensive Plan:** The Comprehensive Plan provides direction for managing anticipated growth in the unincorporated portion of Sarasota County. Planning for a sustainable community is the overarching theme of the Comprehensive Plan. Sarasota County government is committed to lead by example, promote public participation and work in community partnership to improve our quality of life and protect the natural systems that support life.
- **Energy Economic Zone:** Sarasota County was one of two communities in the state authorized to create an Energy Economic Zone (EEZ). The goals are to cultivate green economic development, encourage renewable electric energy generation, manufacture products that contribute to energy conservation and green jobs, as well as discourage

sprawl and develop energy efficient land use patterns. The boundaries of the EEZ have been extended from the original set of properties at I-75 and SR681 to include the Central County Solid Waste Disposal Complex permitted area; Major Employment Centers (MECs); and Urban Service Areas within Sarasota County municipalities, provided that the municipality has adopted a resolution or ordinance authorizing those areas to be included in the EEZ. This extension of the boundaries was the result of a shift in focus away from land-use and transportation to focus on economic development and incentive programs. The Board of County Commissioners adopted Ordinance No. 2012-005, which establishes the boundaries and eligibility of the EEZ program, and Resolution No. 2012-119, which explains the application process and review. To date, the City of Sarasota is the only municipality that has formally opted into the EEZ Program by adopting Resolution No. 12r-2313, defining the boundaries of the City's EEZ.

- **Fruitville Initiative:** The Fruitville Initiative Critical Area Plan (CAP)/Rezone is intended to set the stage for the realization of numerous long-standing goals for significant, sustainable, sensitive and coordinated long-term development of approximately 420 acres of land designated Major Employment Center and Moderate Density Residential, directly east of I-75 on the north and south sides of Fruitville Road. The site is intended to be an employment-anchored, mixed-use place to serve as a bridge between urban and rural portions of the eastern Fruitville/I-75 interchange area.

It follows several years of intensive studies, including most recently a Design Charrette, funded by a public-private partnership between Sarasota County and 5 adjacent private properties, multiple public workshops and the adoption of a comprehensive plan amendment (CPA-2010-02-G) creating a new Special Planning Area (SPA #3) that contains required elements and concepts for any developments utilizing the provisions of the special planning area. These include interconnectivity, walkability, mixed-use development and environmental protection.

These broader level policies and development objectives are now proposed to be implemented via a CAP and rezoning to the Planned Mixed-Use Infill (PMI) (or a similar form-based code district, which would have to be developed). Sarasota County, as one of 6 affected property owners, has assumed responsibility for processing the CAP/rezone applications via a prior executed Planning Agreement.

- **Health Engagement in Planning Processes:** Health is recognized as a fourth tenant of sustainability. Health is represented in planning activities throughout the organization. SCHED creates awareness around planning issues/concerns and their impact on public health, promotes active transportation, livability, and aging in place.
- **Pinecraft:** Pinecraft is historically an Amish and Mennonite community rooted in tradition and culture that champions a sustainable lifestyle. Sarasota County is working with the community, outlining some key components within their community that they would like to see implemented. A few of those might be: LED lights throughout the Pinecraft lighting district, Florida friendly landscaping in both common and private areas, recycling and repurposing, rain barrels, alternative energy sources, water usage, composting, and perhaps organic urban gardening to name a few. This community embraces and could teach us a great deal about giving back more than we take from our environment.

- **Urban Forestry Master Plan:** Originally adopted in 2006, the County's Urban Forestry Master Plan is premised upon use of the urban forest as a bio-utility, designed and managed for continuing exploitation of its greatest social, environmental and economic benefits. This includes use of urban canopy to increase water and air quality, decrease energy consumption, offset or attenuates urban heat island effects, and to promote positive community health impacts, which is a tool for sustainability in the urban ecosystem.

In 2009, the program completed and the Commission adopted the Emergency Preparation and Post-Event Response Plan for the Urban Forest. Through the program, Sarasota County has been recognized for 21 consecutive years as a Tree City USA.

This year, the County Commission, at the recommendation of the Sarasota County Tree Advisory Council, directed staff to reinvigorate the conversation surrounding the county's tree resources and their management, with potential for updating the existing plan. In order to obtain broad community-based perspectives, a Tree Convocation is planned for November 8, 2012, to solicit input and feedback related to these resources as we look to and plan for the future.

- **Water Quality Management Plans:** Watershed Management Plans for Sarasota Bay and Little Sarasota Bay are in development. Analysis of pollutant loadings, water balance and natural systems produced prioritized projects focused on preventing exceedances of regulatory standards and achieving healthier waterbodies. In 2009, the Lemon Bay and Roberts Bay North plans developed water quality targets for these bays and their watersheds. These targets will guide programmatic and regulatory efforts to maintain or improve ecosystem quality in these watersheds.

Transportation

GOVERNANCE

- **Biodiesel:** County fueling stations began providing B5 biodiesel (5%) in August 2007, a change that was expected to reduce fossil fuel dependency by 50,000 gallons per year. Biodiesel has not been readily available during 2012 and several producers went out of business. Current revisions to the fuel contract are expected to provide more options to procure biodiesel in the future.
- **Diesel Particulate Filter/Catalytic Converter Technology:** Fleet is procuring diesel engines with diesel particulate filters and urea systems that reduce emissions to almost zero percent. Diesel engines continue to improve emissions and new construction equipment is now in the process of major emission upgrades.
- **Diesel-Electric Hybrid Buses:** SCAT has a fleet of 20 diesel-electric Hybrid buses. Of the twenty, thirteen are 35-foot-long with 32 passenger seats and seven are 29-foot-long with 23 passenger seats. The SCAT bus replacement plan incorporates the elimination of fluorescent bulbs for lighting. LED (light emitting diode) technology is utilized which reduces ground water pollution potential and improves fuel economy. In 2012, SCAT is completing an analysis and comparison of new vehicles operating on clean diesel meeting all federal EPA requirements.

- **E-10 Ethanol Fuel:** County fueling stations began providing E10 Ethanol fuel in August 2008, before it was required by state law. That change was expected to reduce fossil fuel dependency by 35,000 gallons per year. E-10 gasoline is now the only gasoline Fleet sites dispense.
- **Employee Commute:** County employees have access to a state sponsored commuter services program that provides commute reduction support through ride-share matching, vanpools, transit information, emergency ride home, and education and incentives (see www.CommuterServicesFL.com). Currently, 415 employees are registered with the program. On June 24, 2010, an event was held honoring Commuter Services Day, where employees from the County and other public agencies came together for information on alternatives to single occupancy vehicles. Over 200 employees registered for Commuter Services on the day of the event. Emergency Services has implemented computer training for Fire and EMS that allow personnel to complete training from both the station and from home, reducing fuel consumption and overtime costs. A comprehensive employee e-Work policy was also developed to reduce office space needs, improve efficiency and reduce employee commutes.
- **Fleet Alternatively Fueled Vehicles:** The county fleet includes 24 hybrid electric cars, 2 hybrid electric bucket trucks and 15 low speed electric vehicles. Four Toyota Priuses were converted to Plug In Hybrids in 2009 thanks to a partnership with Florida Power and Light, with a total annual estimated fuel savings of up to 1,500 gallons. Additional hybrids are expected to be added to the fleet through the vehicle replacement program in 2013.
- **Fleet Fuel Reductions:** Newer assets are providing better fuel economy with less emissions. Fleet continues to work with our customers to reduce idling and plan trip routes to save fuel. We have procured several hybrid bucket trucks that utilize battery power when using the bucket, saving fuel as the large diesel engine would normally be left running to power the hydraulics.
- **Fleet Maintenance:** Fleet Services follows a proactive preventative maintenance schedule on all assets to identify and eliminate potential problems with equipment that could result in higher than necessary fuel consumption. These maintenance schedules also provide an opportunity to upgrade vehicle equipment to more sustainable alternatives such as more efficient LED lights. Safety/ preventative maintenance checklists also include the use of diagnostic test equipment to ensure engines and emissions are operating at proper original equipment manufacturers standards. In addition to maintenance efforts, Fleet is also procuring all new vehicles with LED lighting where possible, with particular success on Emergency Services assets.
- **Fleet Water Pollution Prevention:** Fleet Services continues to order replacement assets that are used around waterways with biodegradable hydraulic oil. We have converted almost all assets used around waterways to mineral oil.
- **Idling Reduction:** All Fleet Service facilities have "NO IDLING" signs in and around the buildings to promote fuel savings and reduce emissions. The signs have been effective at reducing the number of assets left idling and idling is discussed at all fleet meetings with customers.

- **Mobile Data Terminals:** Mobile data terminals have been installed in fire, EMS, and command staff vehicles. These terminals include an automatic vehicle location system and electronic mapping software, providing more accurate identification of the closest available unit to be dispatched and the most direct driving directions. This reduces emergency response time, fuel use and vehicle miles while improving vehicle use and fuel consumption data availability. In 2011, the software on the MDT machines was updated, giving the responding crews more data to make decisions prior to arrival at the scene of an incident. They now share the same map the 911 center uses. This map is updated by GIS on a quarterly basis giving units a much updated map that keeps up with new streets and hydrants within our responding area.
- **Priority Dispatch:** There are currently discussions between the County Fire Department, the Medical Director, North Port Fire Rescue and the 911 center on implementing Priority Dispatch to change the number and type of vehicles that respond to an incident based on the type of call. This procedure will result in a reduction of vehicles being dispatched and a reduction in fuel consumption.
- **Road Maintenance:** All pavement markings are placed using thermoplastic material rather than paint. As a result, the retro-reflectivity continues to be maintained as the material wears out, providing a longer life span. The County has also begun to use a new resurfacing technology called micro-surfacing that requires less energy and produces little to no hydrocarbon emissions.
- **SCAT:** Providing public transportation service to nearly 3 million passengers per year, SCAT continues to improve fixed route transit services and commute trips in the urban core areas. As of November 2012, SCAT has 60-minute service on all major routes including those connecting North Port and Englewood to Venice. SCAT offers 30-minute service on several routes connecting Venice to Sarasota and Sarasota to Palmetto in Manatee County including, Route 6, Route 99 , Route 17, and Route 12. Neighborhood routes within North Port operate less frequently and connect to routes serving Venice. SCAT operates nine routes on Sunday. Two of the Sunday routes operate hourly service—Route 1411 and Route 1713.
- **Solar Powered Maintenance Vehicles:** Fleet has procured several solar powered field groomers and EV club cars. We are testing the suitability and reliability of these assets for future buys.

COMMUNITY

- **Legacy Trail:** Purchased in 2004 and opened to the public in 2008, the 12.4 mile long former rail corridor provides bike and pedestrian access to citizens. In 2011, the Venice Pedestrian Overpass opened allowing safe access across US41.

The County purchased a 10-acre site in Osprey using Neighborhood Parkland Acquisition funds. A park concept plan was approved by the County Commission in September. Access and improvements to the site are expected to be completed in late 2012. Osprey Junction Trailhead provides one more way for the public to access the Legacy Trail. Hosting 118,000 riders last year, the Trail recently celebrated completion of the trestle bridge over Dona Bay to extend connection from McIntosh Road to the Venice Train Depot.

- Online and Real-Time Transit Routing Information:** Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) is using technology to improve customer information and system performance. In 2009, SCAT implemented Google Transit to promote public transit and offer convenient customer information. Google Maps, a popular online mapping website, now seamlessly introduces transit information to existing and potential transit riders. Bus stop/station icons appear on the Google map, and a “Public Transit” link appears as an alternative if the search is for driving directions. In 2011, SCAT added Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and installed Vehicle Locators and Automatic Voice Annunciation on all SCAT buses and Mobile Data Terminals on all paratransit vehicles. These technologies offer real time bus schedule information for the customer, scheduling efficiencies for paratransit operations, live alerts for fixed route schedule adherence and automatic vehicle reporting for scheduling vehicle maintenance. BusTime dynamic signage is installed at transfer locations to display accurate arrival time to transit riders. TRAC is available on the web as a source for updated arrival information for bus routes.
- Regional Automated Traffic Management System:** The County, in partnership with Manatee County and FDOT, will be installing technology across the regional road network to allow real time traffic monitoring and control at a regional level to offset unexpected events and minimize congestion caused by unusual traffic loads.
- Sidewalks to Promote Walkability:** The County has established a Regional Sidewalk Network Program. This program provides for sidewalks to schools as well as connecting to other types of infrastructure such as recreational areas, parks, increasing access to public transit, employment, shopping areas, etc.
- Trail System:** In December 2006, the County adopted the Trail Master Plan. This plan provides for both recreation and alternative transportation opportunities via walking, biking, etc

Waste

GOVERNANCE

- Demolition for Residential or Commercial Structures:** For Sarasota County owned residential or commercial structures requiring demolition, all proposals require the vendor identify each component being demolished and follow specified requirements for salvage and recycling.
- Mobility Construction Projects:** The County strongly encourages reusing material produced from road projects. The Fruitville Road and Honore Road project contractors recycled the cleared wood products and produced mulch for the project landscaping.
- Recycling Champions:** Sarasota County has instituted a Recycling Champions program which encourages County employees to take the lead to increase recycling in their building. Due to a new county facility recycling contract, in addition to having new pricing that is 50% less than what was being paid under the previous contract, County employees can now recycle all plastics with the #1 through #7 symbol.

COMMUNITY

- **Compost and Mulch:** Free compost and mulch provided since 1994 from yard waste at the County landfill.
- **Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Fleet:** During contract extension talks with County's solid waste collection contractor, the County was able to negotiate the conversion from a diesel-powered residential collection fleet to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG). By the end of 2012, 37 CNG powered vehicles will be placed in service with another 20 to be phased in over the next three years. A CNG fueling station (the first in the County) was built to service the new trucks and will be available to residents needing CNG fuel for their personal and/or commercial vehicles. A solar panel array is also planned to provide power to the contractor's facilities.
- **Construction & Demolition Material Recycling and Salvage:** The County was awarded a 2007 FDEP Innovative Grant to research incentives to increase Construction and Demolition (C&D) recycling. Developed website guidance documents and site plan materials. Conducted pilot program to identify and overcome obstacles to worksite separation of waste construction materials.
- **Construction Reuse Centers:** Local entrepreneurs have opened up or expanded construction reuse capacity; Habitat for Humanity (two locations), Sarasota Architectural Salvage, Used Stuff.
- **Hazardous Waste:** There were over 10,000 participants at our permanent chemical collection centers: 27,000 customers utilizing curbside collection of used oil, used oil filters, and electronics; and 1700 participants in special collection events. Programs such as permanent collection centers, curbside collection, Re-Uz-It store, mobile chemical collection events and medical sharps collection limit improper hazardous waste disposal.
- **Integrated Solid Waste Management:** Due to the recycling efforts of residents and businesses and the compaction process that is utilized to bury solid waste, the first phase of the county's landfill was used for thirteen years, instead of the original projection of ten years.
- **Mercury Disposal Outreach Program:** In July and August 2009, Sarasota County implemented a program that reached over 1,600 local businesses offering free disposal of mercury containing devices. The program resulted in participation by 33 businesses and proper disposal of over 33 pounds of mercury. By utilizing this opportunity for free disposal, local businesses saved over \$1,570 in disposal costs. The cost avoided from spills that were prevented by removing these items is difficult to estimate, but could have been over \$1.8 million. The County is currently developing a plan to extend the program to the medical community and others who have need of disposal services for mercury.
- **Nathan Benderson Park Rowing Event Water Bottle Reduction:** Five gallon water jugs were provided so that event participants could fill their own reusable water containers, replacing individual plastic water bottles for all regatta events.

- **Painter/ Paint Contractor Workshops:** Following a mailing to over 680 painters or paint contractors, workshops were held on proper paint disposal and management techniques. Participants shared information on creative ways to reduce excess paint and dispose of leftovers in a responsible way. Plans are being developed to reach out to contractors on an on-going basis.
- **Parks and Recreation Waste Recycling Program:** Since 1993, Parks and Recreation has implemented public recycling in all parks. They monitor the volume of recyclables and continue to experiment with various receptacles to further promote recycling by park users.
- **Recycling:** Mandatory recycling program adopted in 1991 for all residential, commercial, and construction/demolition debris generated in the unincorporated areas of the County. Increased site visits and compliance rates with commercial sector since 2007 through education outreach activities and code enforcement follow-up where needed. Developed Commercial Recycling How-to Guide as well as bilingual recycling posters. Updated website to include list of recycling processors and collection service providers. Exploring the addition of items to recyclable materials listing as part of contract negotiation with processor.