

## County emphasizes guidelines for handling debris

By Hector Flores

Following Hurricane Ian, our debris contractor collected more than 4.7 million cubic yards of vegetative, construction and demolition debris. Since we concluded collection activities two months ago, we've noticed an increase in debris being placed in county rights-of-way and other locations. I want to take some time today to provide information about how we're addressing this issue.

For starters, our solid waste collection contractor, Waste Management, continues to collect bulk debris placed in rights-of-way, but it is important that residents abide by the rules. Waste Management will collect up to four cubic yards of bulk debris per week. A cubic yard is about the size of a shopping cart.

Bulk debris includes landscaping waste, furniture, appliances and household hazardous waste. Place yard trimmings loose in a garbage can, paper lawn and leaf bag or in tied bundles. Yard waste must *not* be placed in plastic bags. Limbs may be no more than six feet in length or more than 10 inches in diameter. Waste Management does *not* collect construction and demolition debris.

Construction and demolition debris should be hauled away by contractors performing the work. If homeowners are performing repair work, construction and demolition debris can be taken to one of our two mini-transfer and recycling facilities at 7070 Environmental Way in Englewood or 19765 Kenilworth Blvd., in Port Charlotte. Both facilities operate 9 a.m.-3:45 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday. Debris may also be dropped off at the Charlotte County Landfill at 29751 Zemel Road south of Punta Gorda. The landfill operating hours are 7 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday and 7 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday. Construction and demolition debris that is left in the right-of-way may be treated as a code violation if not removed.

Do not place debris on vacant lots. This is considered illegal dumping. The county is actively investigating numerous illegal dumping cases. Violators may be fined. To report illegal dumping, call 1-866-938-6722, visit [www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov) and click the Contact Us button or use the Charlotte County app on your phone or device. The app can be downloaded from the Apple Store for iPhones or Google Play for Android devices. Search for Charlotte County.

Our goal is to get Charlotte County "back to normal" as soon as possible. We understand many of our residents have a lot of work left to do, as does the county. But piling up debris in rights-of-way or dumping it illegally is not getting us back to normal any faster. It's prolonging the recovery process and creating eyesores and potential health and safety hazards in neighborhoods. We ask everyone do their part to put Ian behind us by being aware of the proper way to dispose of debris. Thank you.

*Readers may reach County Administrator Hector Flores at [Hector.Flores@CharlotteCountyFL.gov](mailto:Hector.Flores@CharlotteCountyFL.gov).*