

Ensuring Charlotte has an efficient and effective government

By Hector Flores

On June 20, the County Commission held its fourth and final focus areas workshop as part of its two-year budget process. As I discussed before, the board's strategic plan is divided in four focus areas: infrastructure, public services, economic and community development, and efficient and effective government.

At the June 20 efficient and effective government workshop, the board reviewed its existing bold goals, which are to ensure the county is a great place to work; improve line of sight; and to continuously improve.

One initiative undertaken this past year was to create and distribute line of sight boards to departments. The term line of sight refers to the ability of employees to understand and align their work with the overall goals, objectives and strategies of the organization. Employees write brief descriptions of tasks or projects in a designated focus area space to promote awareness of the organization's direction, employees' roles within it, and how their efforts contribute to its success.

In the wake of Hurricane Ian, the board added a new bold goal: Strengthening the resiliency of the organization and community. Resiliency is the ability of an organization to absorb and adapt to a rapidly changing environment and to enable it to deliver its objectives and to survive and prosper.

To achieve the board's goal, staff identified numerous ongoing and new initiatives. We will continue to emphasize strategic planning and implement those plans. The storm underscored the importance of our fiscal stabilization plan, which enables us to weather adverse events. Training and professional development have given the county an agile leadership and workforce, which gives them the ability to quickly adapt.

Charlotte County was the first local government to sign the Southwest Florida Regional Resiliency Compact, an agreement between regional county and municipal governments to collaboratively identify, prepare for, adapt to and mitigate climate change impacts. We're committed to making tough decisions to mitigate future risks using our land use and development policies and other means in support of our sustainability and resiliency goals.

The county can only be as resilient as its employees. That means supporting the well-being and development of our workforce. This past week, three more employees graduated from the Leadership Charlotte program, bringing the total number of past and present employee graduates to 34. Coinciding with the revision of the county's mission, vision and values, we created an Exceptional Service Award presented by administration to county staff who have been cited by residents or colleagues for delivering exceptional service to internal or external customers.

The hurricane and its aftermath also highlighted a need for additional resources to support our employees' mental health. As I've noted before, my colleagues diligently served our community before during and after Hurricane Ian even as they dealt with preparedness, storm damages and recovery challenges of their own. We convened an employee mental health committee that developed recommendations for additional services. I am personally committed to building on our existing culture of mental health awareness and support for our employees.

At the core of the county's strategic plan, focus areas, bold goals and initiatives are the mission, vision and values set by the board. The mission is delivering exceptional service. The vision is to preserve and enrich our community's quality of life for those who live, work and play in our paradise. The values we share are captured in the phrase Charlotte CARES. The CARES part is an acronym for being committed, accountable, resourceful, energetic and supportive.

With these concepts guiding our decision-making, operations and investments, the county has demonstrated its organizational strength time and again in the face of numerous challenges. I'm proud to be a part of this team and look forward to continuing to serve our community.

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