

District starting Welcome Wednesday program in November

With all the exciting projects underway in the districts, we sure are looking forward to Sunday morning, Nov. 2, when we turn our clocks back and pick up an extra hour! District supervisors and staff have been very busy with a multitude of projects and activities and there are many more to come.

One of the critical aspects of my job is carrying out the District's policies and fiduciary responsibilities. The beginning of the fiscal year on Oct. 1 found all of the districts to be in great financial shape, with no increases in assessment rates and an aggressive work plan for the year guaranteeing the level of service and necessary capital projects to meet resident expectations.

This is a testament to the hard work of both your elected officials and District employees committed to the core values of innovation and creativity, hospitality, hard work and stewardship.

Having worked in local government for the last 34 years, I can assure you this is a unique and successful partnership and one that is built on a CDD model designed and structured to be sound.

This is one of the reasons why the upcoming elections are so important. It is critical that you vote and do your homework before you fill out your ballot. In today's world of politics, it is very easy for sound bites to define a candidate's position.

However, for District elections, it is also easy to check out the facts. We can provide records, information, meeting minutes, history of issues and Paul Harvey's "rest of the story": all you have to do is



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contact us.

We do not endorse district candidates. We can, however, provide resources to help you evaluate the information, rumors and statements associated with District issues.

All you have to do is send an inquiry through our website, districtgov.org, contacting me directly at janet.tutt@districtgov.org or do your own research on the website, which includes all the meeting minutes, budgets, audits and contact information.

In addition to the new fiscal year and elections, we also have been very busy with maintenance and capital projects throughout The Villages.

Unfortunately, to keep our facilities in tip-top shape, sometimes there is some inconvenience and modification to your use of some of the facilities, programs, roads, paths and other infrastructure. The improvements are necessary to maintain the quality of the community.

Please know that although we try very hard to minimize the effects of our efforts, sometimes you will be inconvenienced. You can check out our activities on the website or sign up for e-notifications, which provide up-to-the-minute closures and District activities throughout The Villages.

The Village Center Community Development District supervisors also have been busy the last couple of months.

At the Board's direction, staff moved forward with the refunding (refinancing) of the Recreation Amenities Bonds and the Village Center Service Area and Little Sumter Service Area utilities bonds.

As a result of the refinancing, the savings amounted to almost \$15 million over the term of the bonds. Although all three of these funds are strong, this means the annual debt service is reduced and will generate additional available funds for reserves or use for any legal purpose.

We also accomplished our move to new offices in Lake Sumter Landing. While many of you are aware of the move (and the closing of the Wedgewood and Laurel Manor offices), a lot of winter residents are just now making their way back to their homes in The Villages.

With the exception of Community Watch and Village Public Safety, all District offices now are in one location. Access to our offices is through the double doors in the breezeway across from Starbucks in Lake Sumter Landing. If you have any questions or need more information regarding our new offices, call Customer Service at 753-4508. Finally, I would like to announce that beginning Nov. 5, we will be holding Welcome Wednesday at 8 a.m. every week at the District offices in Lake Sumter Landing.

This will be an informal opportunity to meet district staff, receive a weekly update about District happenings, ask questions, address concerns, clear up rumors and explain any confusion you may have

regarding the Districts, our services, our legal framework, board actions, etc.

In addition, we will

welcome thoughts you may have regarding the Districts.

We will be inviting one member from each board each week and you will have an opportunity to meet with them individually if you wish.

We will be holding Welcome

Wednesday for a six-month trial period and then will evaluate its success. Please think about joining us and if you have any suggestions, let me know.

We will continue to hold District Orientation at 10 a.m. every Thursday and Resident

Academy will continue to be held regularly.

Finally, please remember to drive safely and wear light and reflective clothing when out and about at dusk or dark. We want to see you happy and healthy at District Orientation, Resident

Academy or board meetings.

However, if you can't join us in person, we look forward to meeting you here again at Our Place.

Janet Tutt can be reached at janet.tutt@districtgov.org.