

CHANGES AROUND TOWN

It sure is nice to have some warm weather again, isn't it? I know our recent chill reminded me why I decided to move south almost 32 years ago. And unlike many of our northern friends and relatives who are still wearing ear muffs, gloves and wool coats, we are wearing our Florida clothing again and enjoying warmer temperatures.

Some of your plants and foliage, however, probably do not appear to have rebounded as well. I know my yard is a lovely shade of brown and there is no color left anywhere. What I have learned from other freezes is not to be too aggressive cleaning up and cleaning out what does not "look" to be alive. Now is the time to practice patience and wait a period of time before you do anything with your plants.

If you have questions, check with your professional landscapers, County Extension Offices or keep a watchful eye for articles and columns in various publications from gardening experts familiar with Florida foliage, the effects of cold weather and the amount of time to wait before you do anything.

And while you are waiting, the Districts will be waiting also. You may see some of the impacted District landscaping stay just as it is for a period of time until we have had a chance to evaluate it to determine how much is lost, what can be saved and to determine a plan of action. As there are developments, we will keep you up to date through the What's Happening section of the District's Web site, districtgov.org.

One project that is not on hold is the Cart Path Renovation north of County Road 466. Since my last article, the Amenity Authority Committee, the Village Center District Board, and Community Development Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4 have entered into agreements and the engineer has been approved to move forward with the engineering, design and permitting phase of the project estimated at approximately \$6 million.

JANET
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The Cart Path project includes the widening and retrofitting of the following cart paths: El Camino Real; Buena Vista Blvd.; Morse West; the Paradise Park path and parking area; connection between Southern Trace and the tunnel; Saddlebrook Center to the tunnel (County Road 466); and the addition of a path between Morse West path and El Camino Real. The project includes not only the widening and asphaltting of the paths, but also a new irrigation system and landscape changes.

The project is still on track to be bid this spring, constructed during the summer and completed before winter. We urge you to keep checking the Web site and make sure you sign up for automatic e-mail notifications. The notifications will not only provide progress updates, but once construction begins, it will provide critical traffic and detour information. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Eva Rey, Director of Purchasing and Support Services.

As to District business, the auditors have been here the last couple of weeks and should be finishing their work by the end of this month. The audit reports will be presented to the District boards next month and they will be added to the District Web site.

We also have begun the budget process for next fiscal year which does not begin until Oct. 1. We will be meeting with the District boards during the coming months to develop their financial work plan. If you have suggestions or comments, please feel free to contact me or Barbara Kays, Budget Director.

In previous Our Place articles, I made the commitment to keep you informed of developments regarding the IRS audit. Last week, the Village

Center Community Development District's Counsel sent a letter formally requesting technical advice as to whether the District is properly treated as a political subdivision for purposes of Section 103 of the Internal Revenue Code. What this means is that we have asked the IRS to refer the question to its legal counsel to review the facts and legal conclusions the District believes establishes the District as a political subdivision and was authorized to issue the bonds being audited.

The pertinent facts and legal conclusions that have been provided to the IRS can be found on the District's Web site. Just click the Our Place link and the IRS PDF file is listed below this article date for Jan. 21. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Finally, it is an honor to tell you about two awards that were recently presented to the Districts by the Villages Homeowners Association (VHA). It is because of hard-working and outstanding employees, supportive elected officials' leadership, resident involvement and VHA support that the Districts received the following two awards:

■ The 2009 Partnership Award presented to the Village Community Development Districts for outstanding service in the administration and management of the operations of public service and safety, maintenance and recreation services preserving the values of homes and enhancing The Villages lifestyle.

■ The 2009 Service Program Award presented to The Villages Public Safety Department Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Program for life-saving services in emergency response, citizen training and community support enhancing survival, good health and The Villages lifestyle.

Thanks to all of you for a great 2009. Until next time at Our Place, stay safe, remember to share the cart paths, don't speed and be courteous so we can all have a safe 2010!

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