

WHAT TO EXPECT

Evolution of Manatee County's hurricane "social" activation team over the past 5 storms

1. Main challenges
2. Lessons learned
3. Actionable steps

Practice through 3 interactive activities

OUR REPS

- **Kelly Foster, Creative Services Manager**
- **Mackenzie Lang, Digital Content Coordinator**
- **Amanda Hengst, Graphic Designer**

ABOUT MANATEE COUNTY

- South of the Sunshine Skyway Bridge
- 27 miles of beaches (2 bridges)
- 12-mile Manatee River (3 bridges)
- Over 1,200 ponds
- Population Approx. 450,000
 - 29%: 65+ years old
 - 19%: Hispanic

*You are
here*



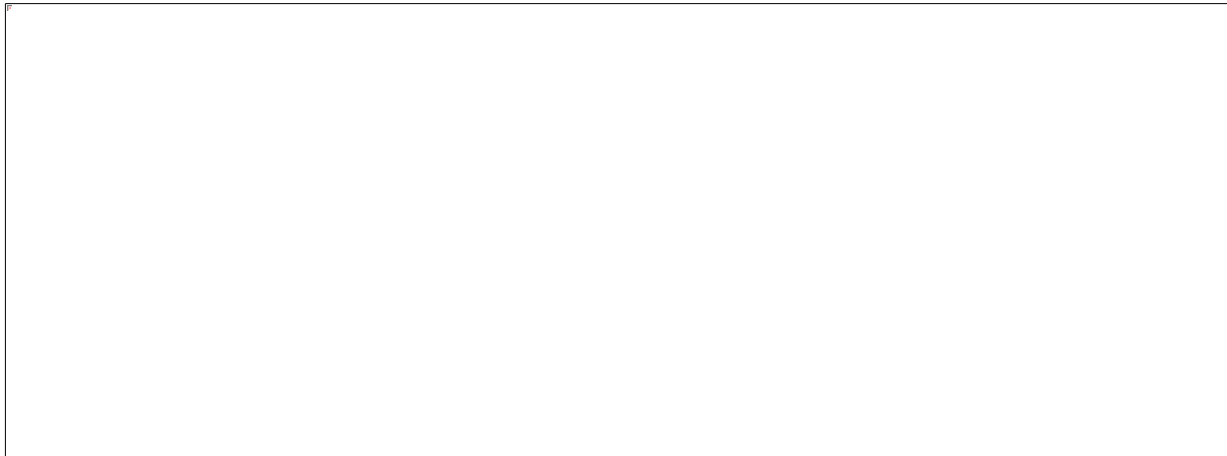
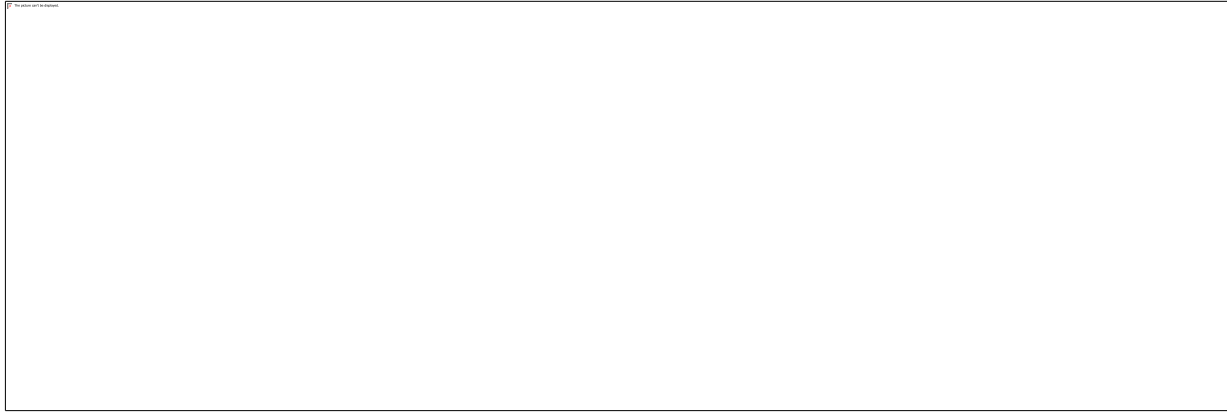
2022: HURRICANE IAN

Main Challenges:

- Skeleton crew
- Team had no previous hurricane experience
- Several social media platforms
- Website crash
- Some municipalities not represented
- Citizen confusion between County vs. City responsibilities
- An enormous number of lift stations needed to be fixed
- Rising floodwaters in Myakka

Ian: Follow Main Platform Guidance

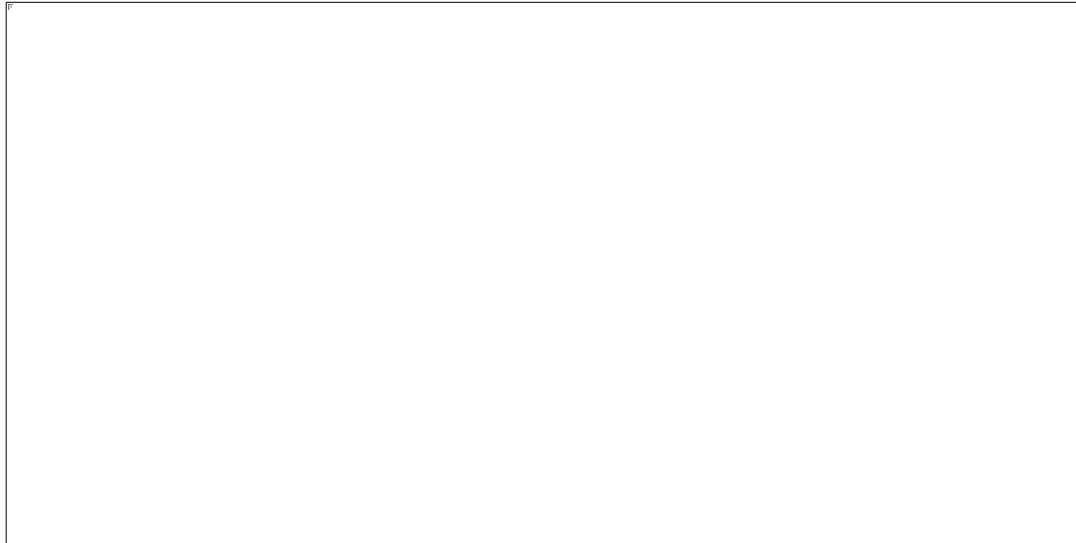
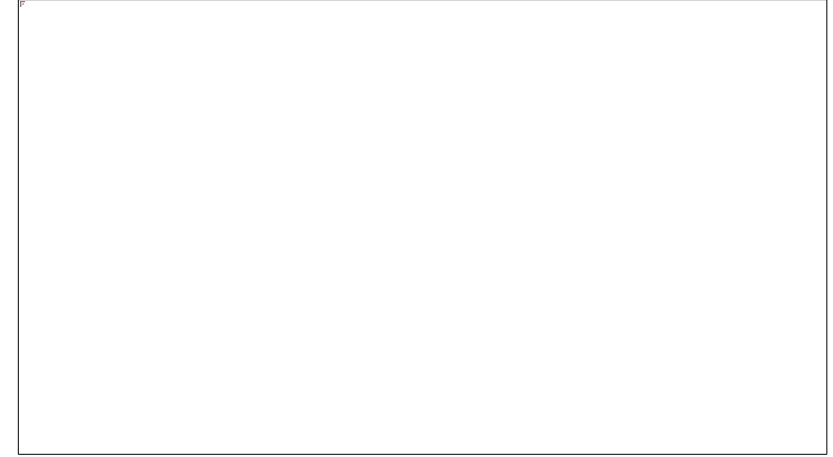
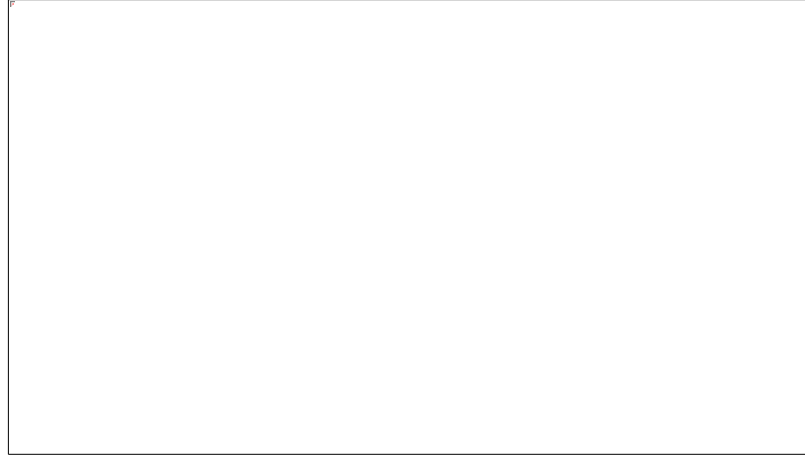
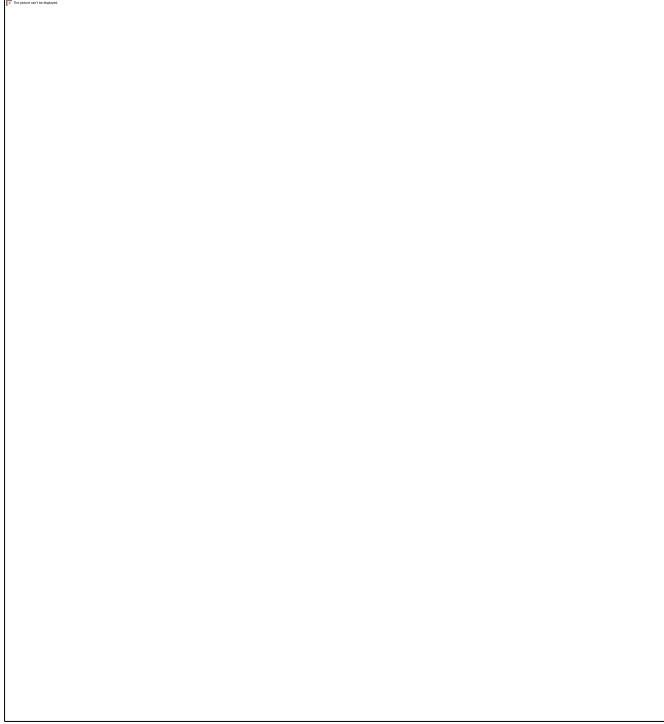
Facebook, X & Nextdoor Banner/Cover Images



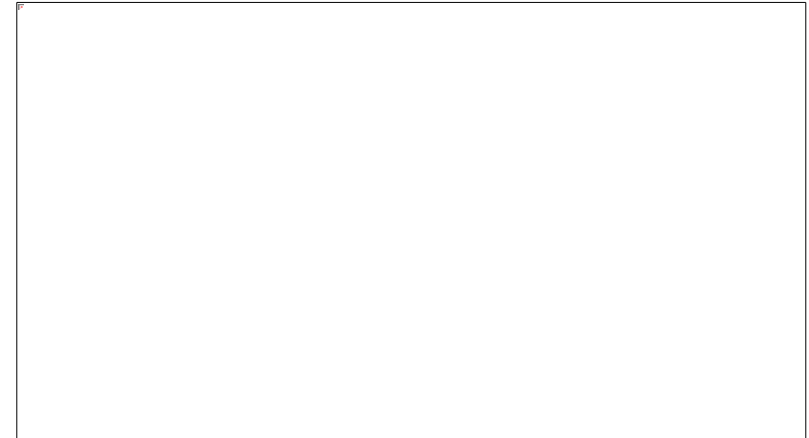
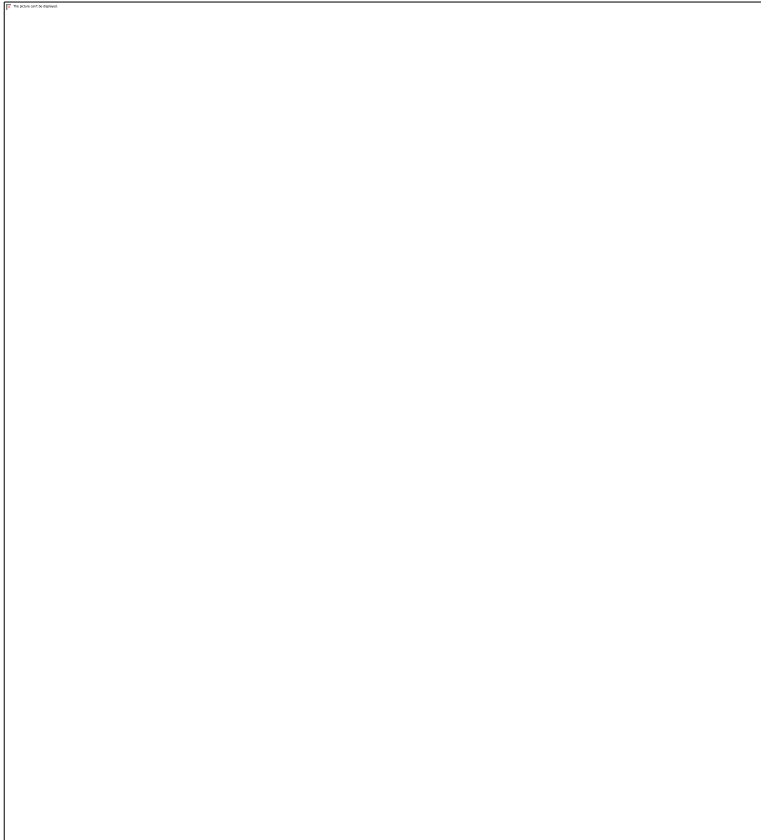
Pinned Posts on Other Platforms



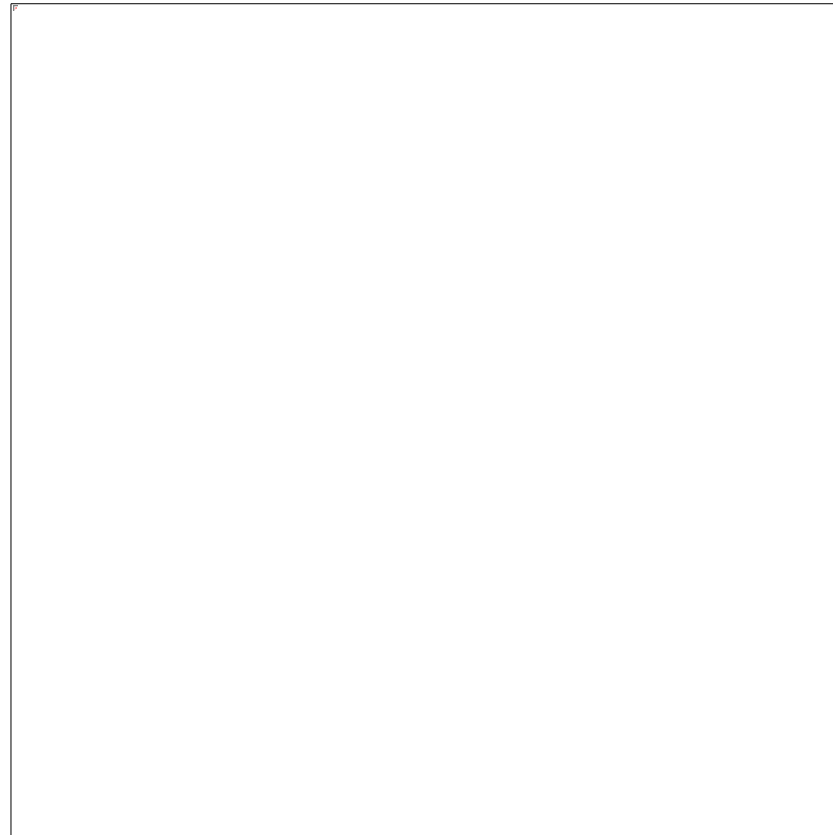
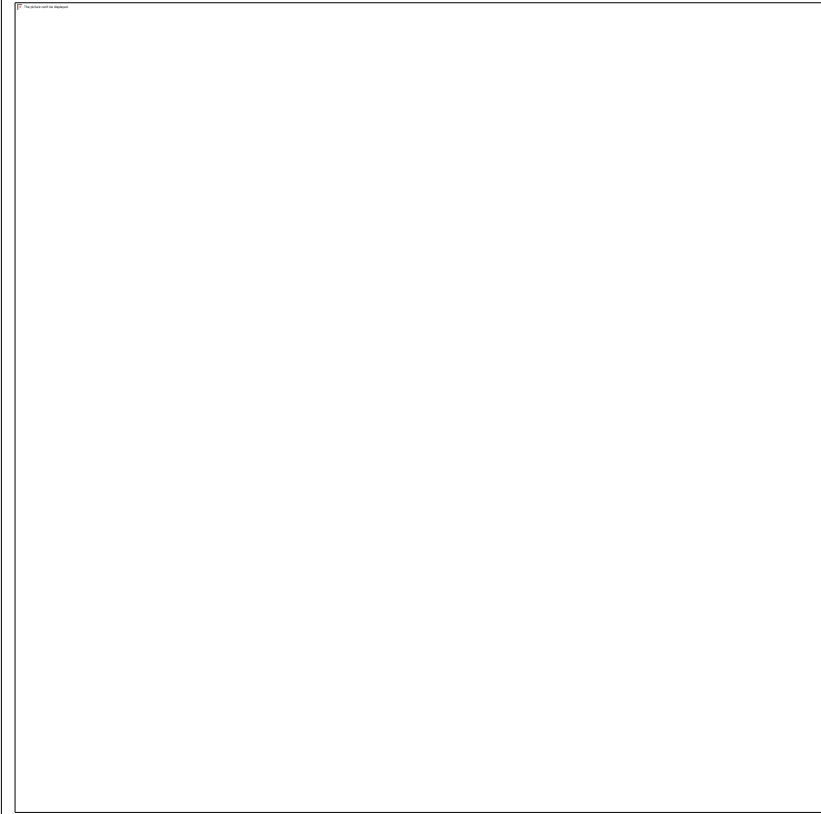
Ian: Branded Storm Imagery



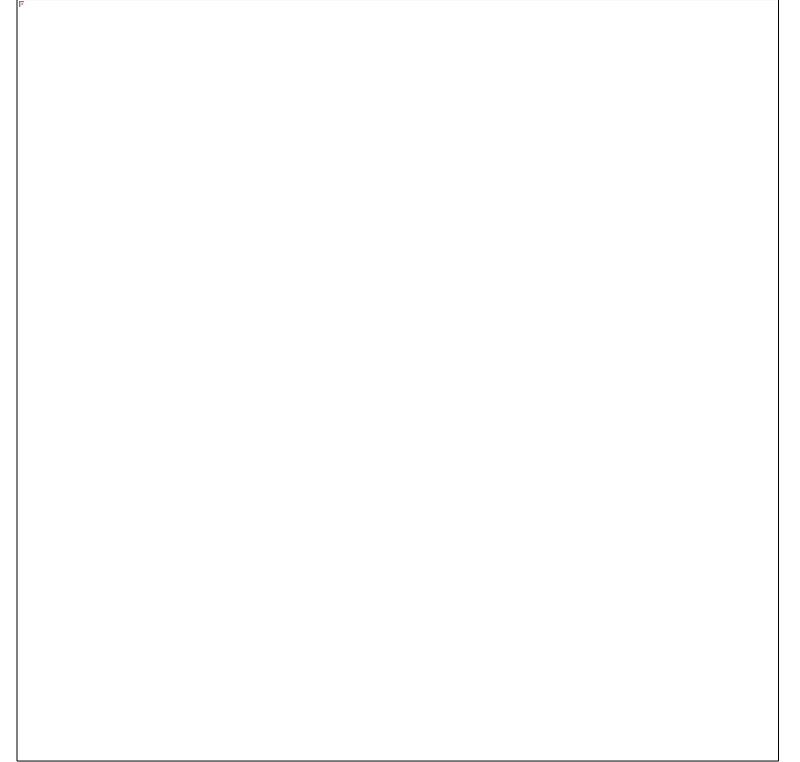
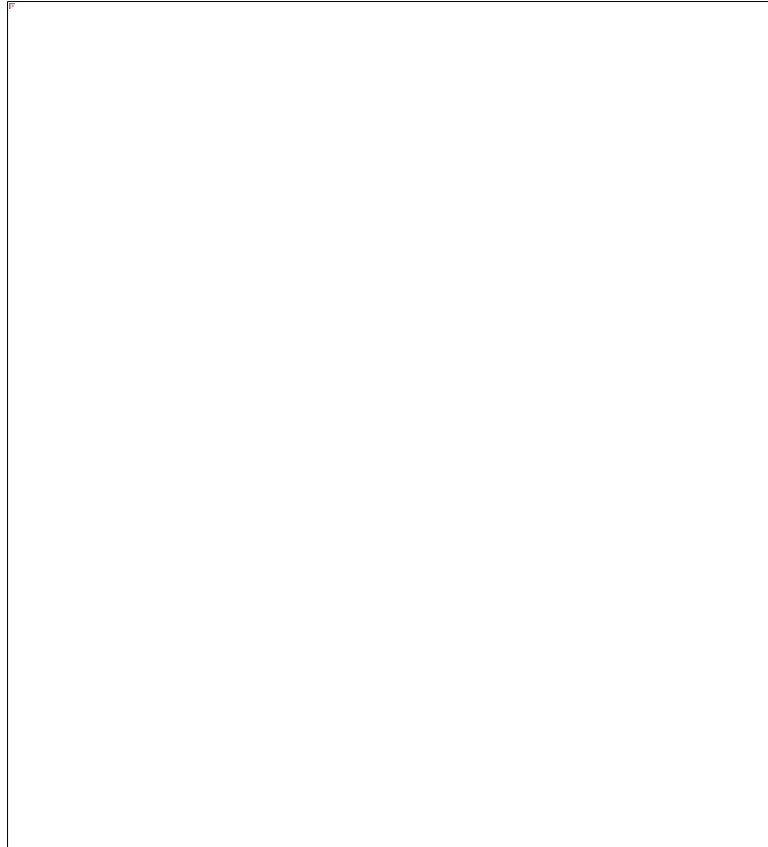
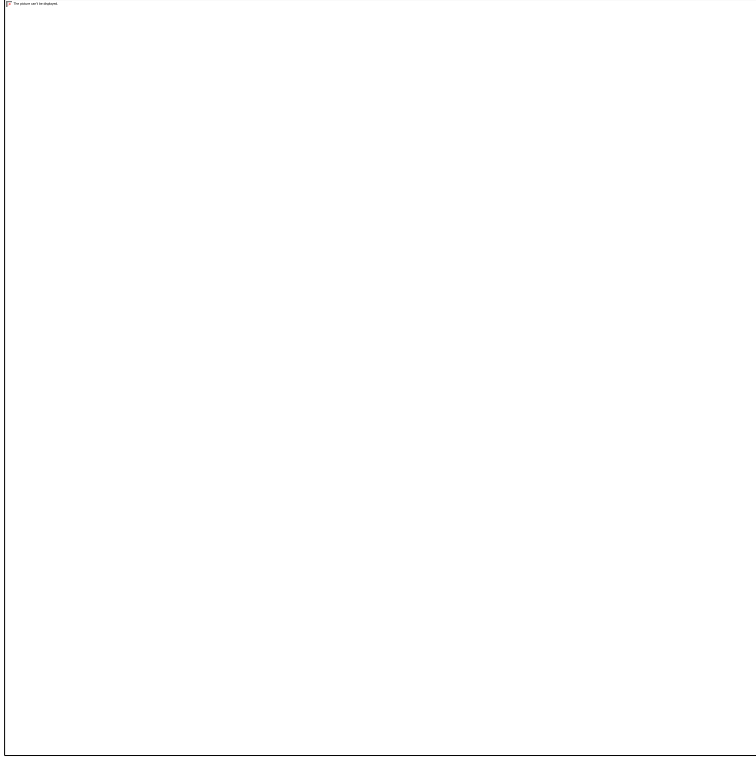
Ian: Use of Hurricane & Important Icons



Ian: Post-Storm Distinction

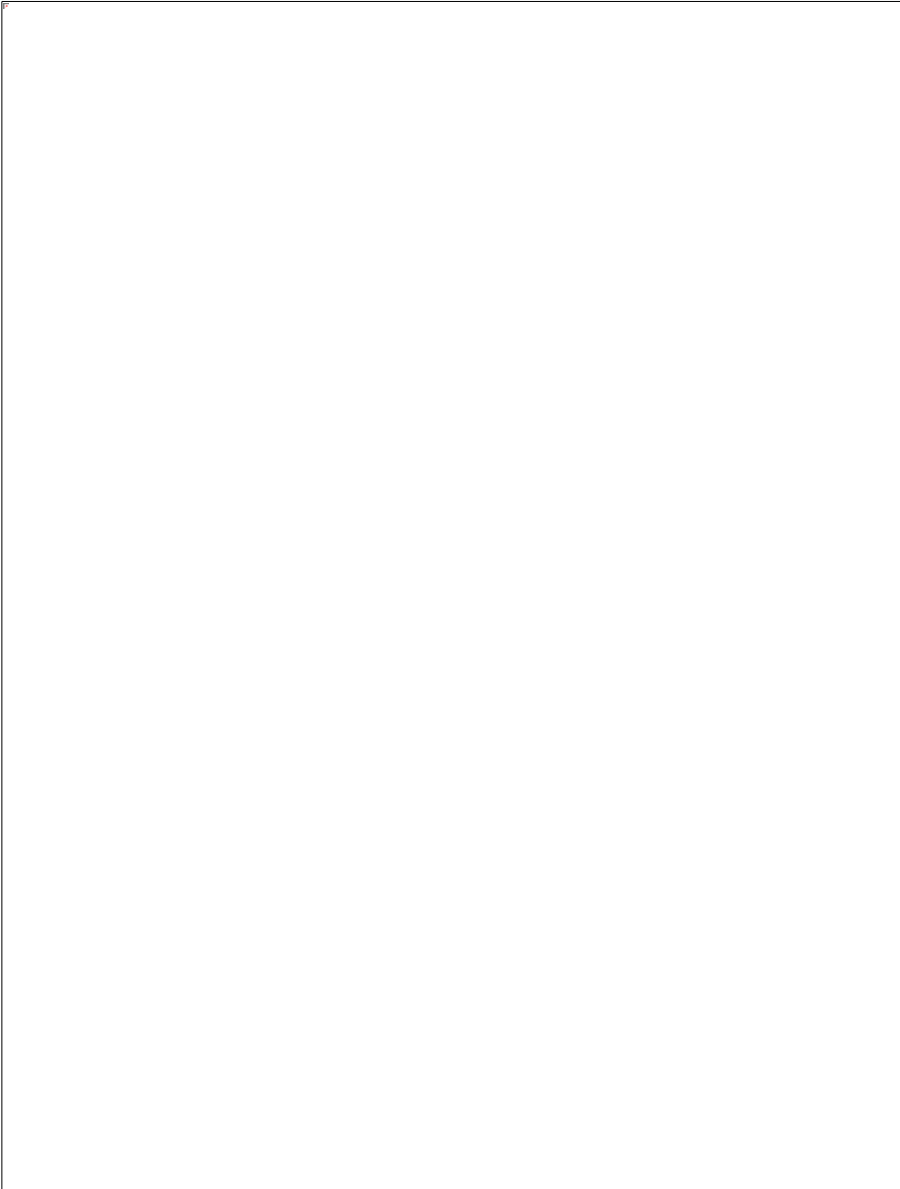


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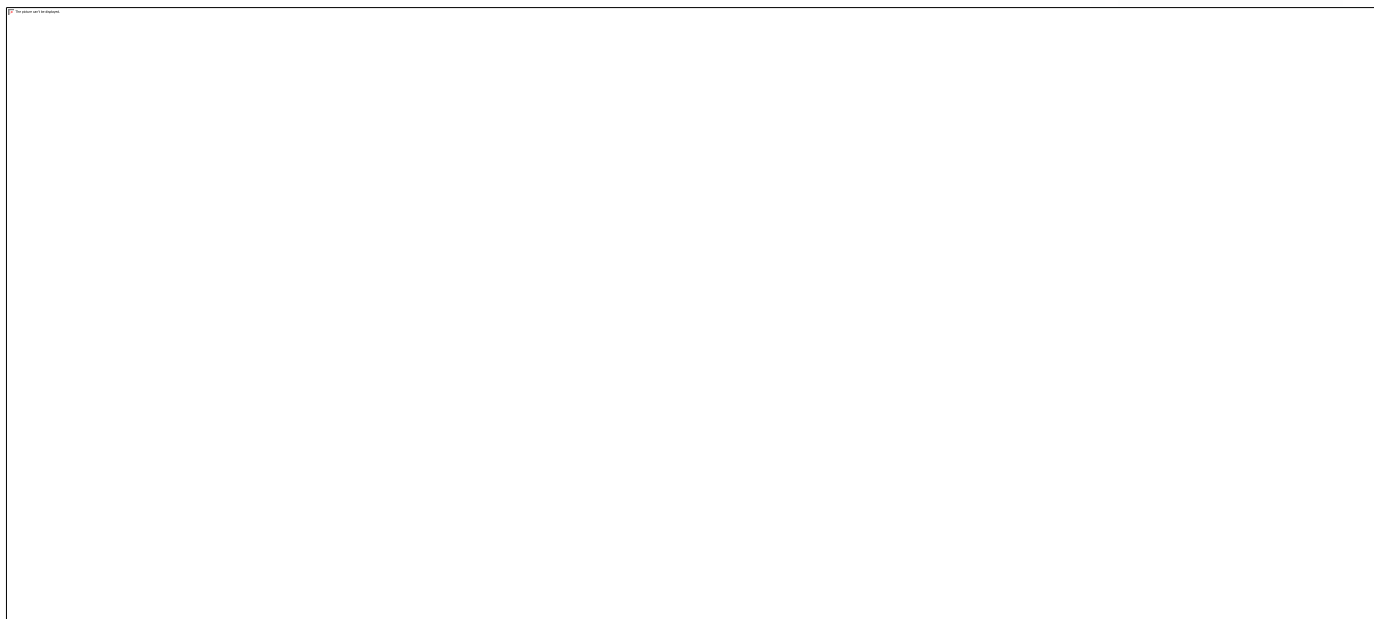


Ian: Catchphrases

Don't be a Disaster Tourist



INTER-AGENCY CONFLICT: Water Shut-Off Messaging



(Source: WWSB, October 2022)

ACTIVITY No. 1: Resolving Inter-Agency Conflicts

The Scenario:

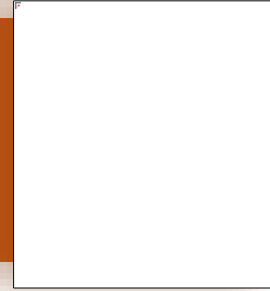
The storm is hitting within the next 12 hours, and we have an influx of calls and requests to promote pertinent information on our social media. Everyone thinks that their messages are THE MOST important messages to share at this moment.

The Challenge:

The group must act as the Joint Information Center (JIC). They have only **one** "Pinned Post" slot and **one** "Regular Post" slot available at a time.

ACTIVITY No. 1:

Resolving Inter-Agency Conflicts



The Requests:

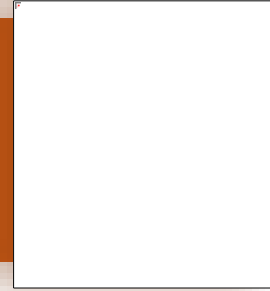
- **Your Municipality:** Posting the difference between an evacuation level and flood zone with links to where to find theirs
- **The Mayor of your local City:** They want you to reshare a post they made for their small community about their specific trash pickup schedule.
- **Public Works:** Sandbag location updates/refills/closures
- **National Weather Station:** They just shared a progress update on the impending storm with vital information about size and strength
- **Public Safety:** In preparation of the storm, reminding the public when you should call 911 vs 311
- **Sheriff:** Posting about traffic updates and telling people to be patient as they evacuate the area
- **Utilities:** Reminder to tie down loose items (like trash bins)

The Task:

You must negotiate a "Hierarchy of Information" for the next 4 hours. They must decide who gets priority and a draft of the timeline of information to put out to residents. Information can be created as a standard post or hold the pinned post spot to get out all information as quickly as possible. You must provide reasoning as to why you are prioritizing posts above others.

ACTIVITY No. 1:

Resolving Inter-Agency Conflicts



The Requests:

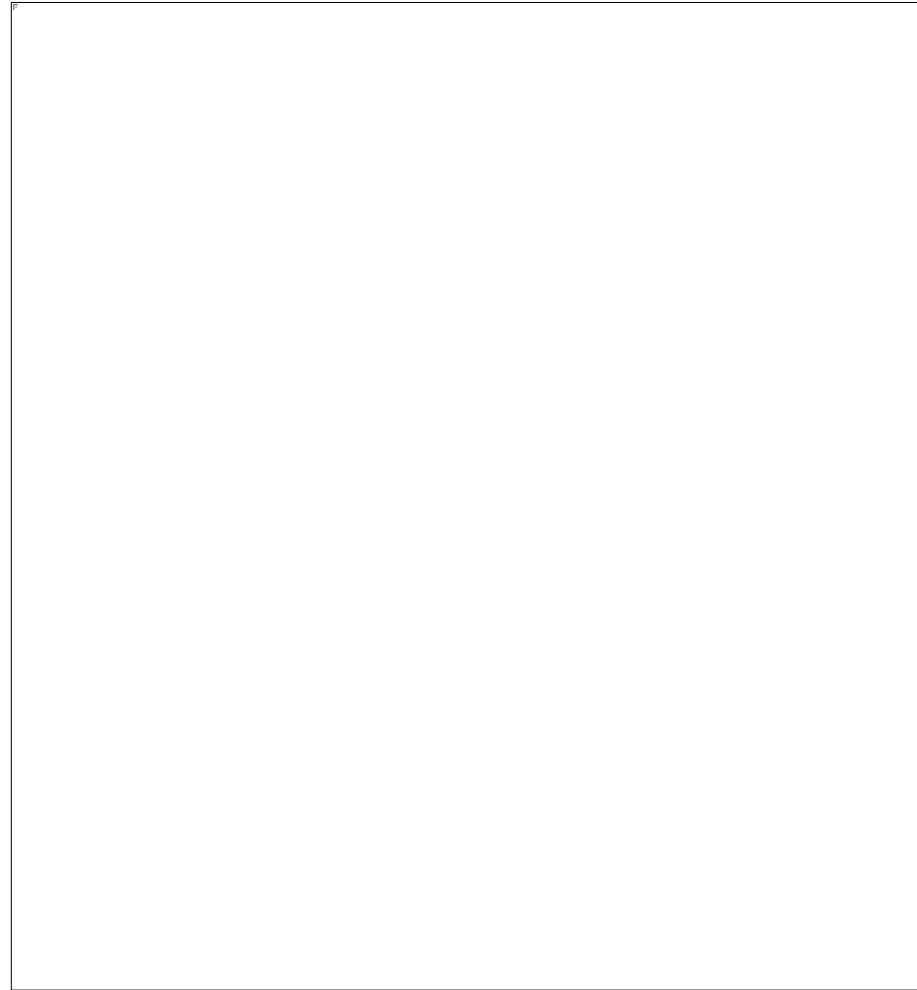
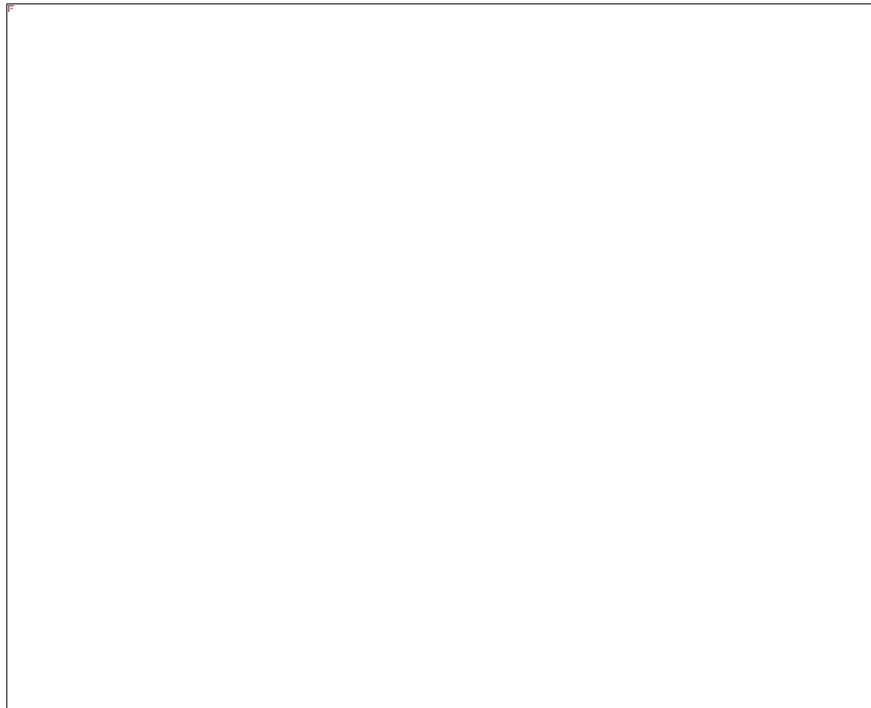
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- **Utilities:** Reminder to tie down loose items (like trash bins)
- **Manatee 311 Surge Team:** Shelters are turning away residents who have pets because they don't know which shelters to go to. Post an updated list of open shelters, including pet friendly and the disability ones.

2023: HURRICANE IDALIA

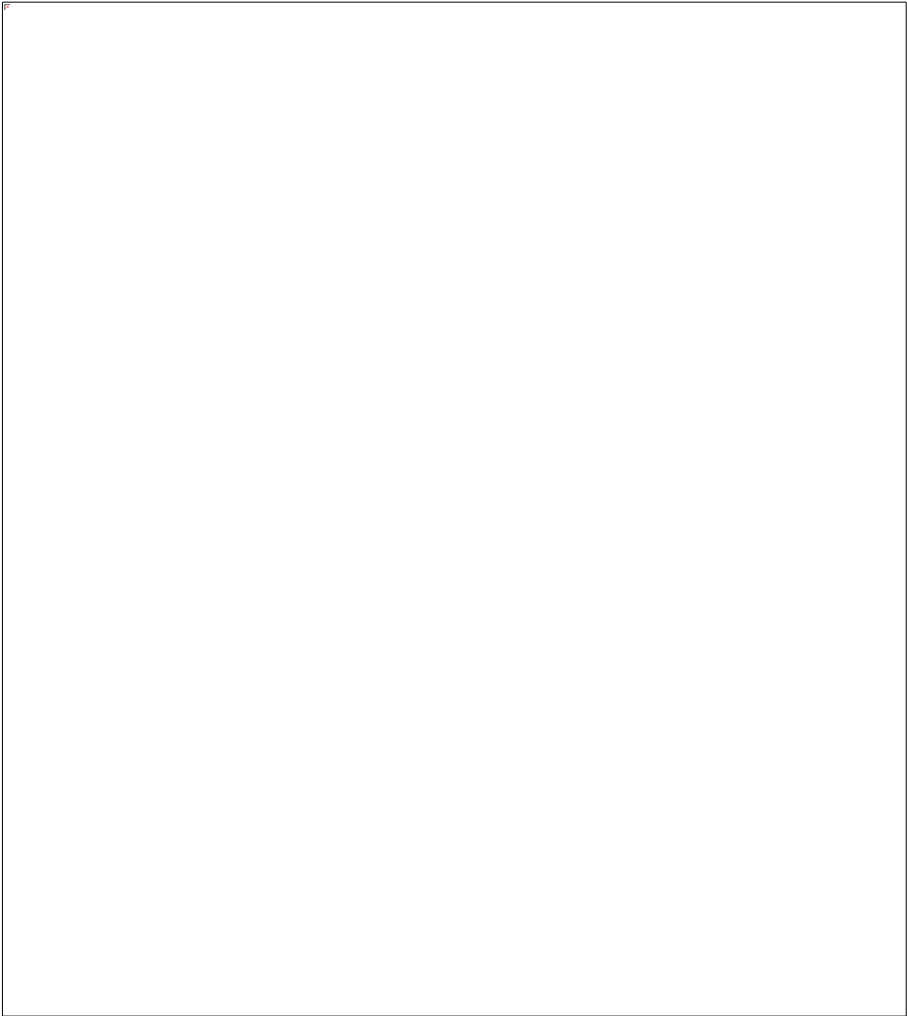
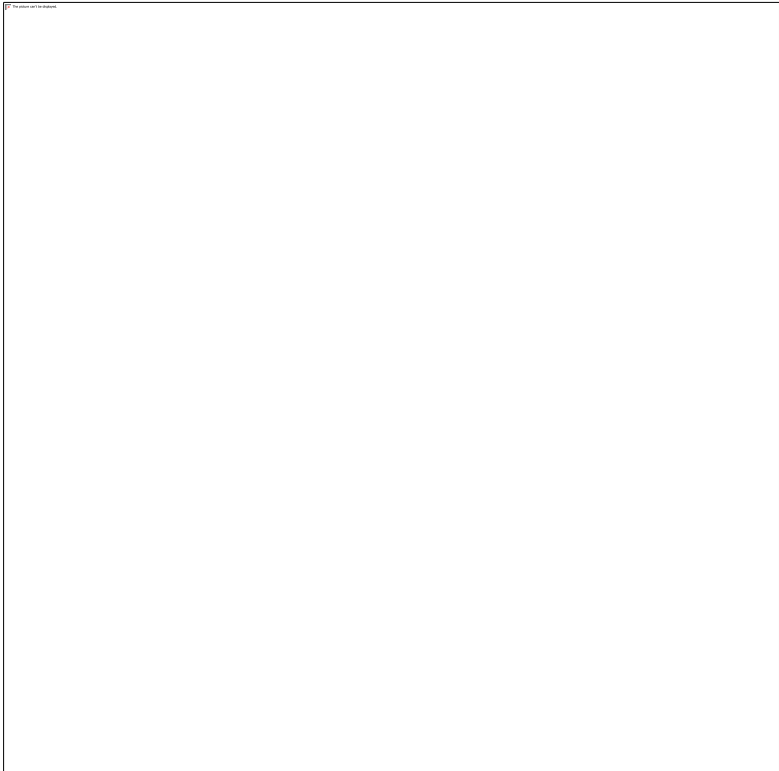
Main Challenges

- Still a skeleton crew (but experienced!)
- A bigger Website crash
- Lack of coordination with municipalities
- No PIO lead (out of town)
- Flooding in low-lying neighborhoods

Idalia: Corresponding Press Release Images/Headlines



Idalia: Continued Icons & Gray/Blue Sky

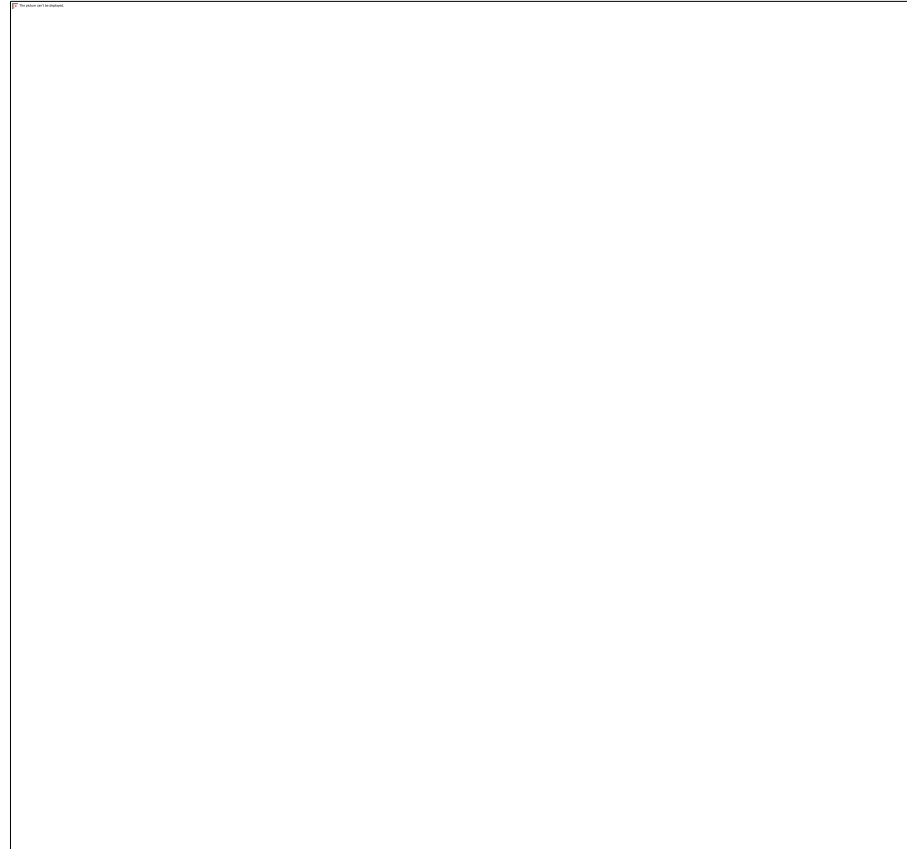


2024: HURRICANE DEBBY

Main Challenges:

- No comments allowed on social
- Analysis Paralysis (having to try to quickly respond to information received from multiple sources)
- IPAWS

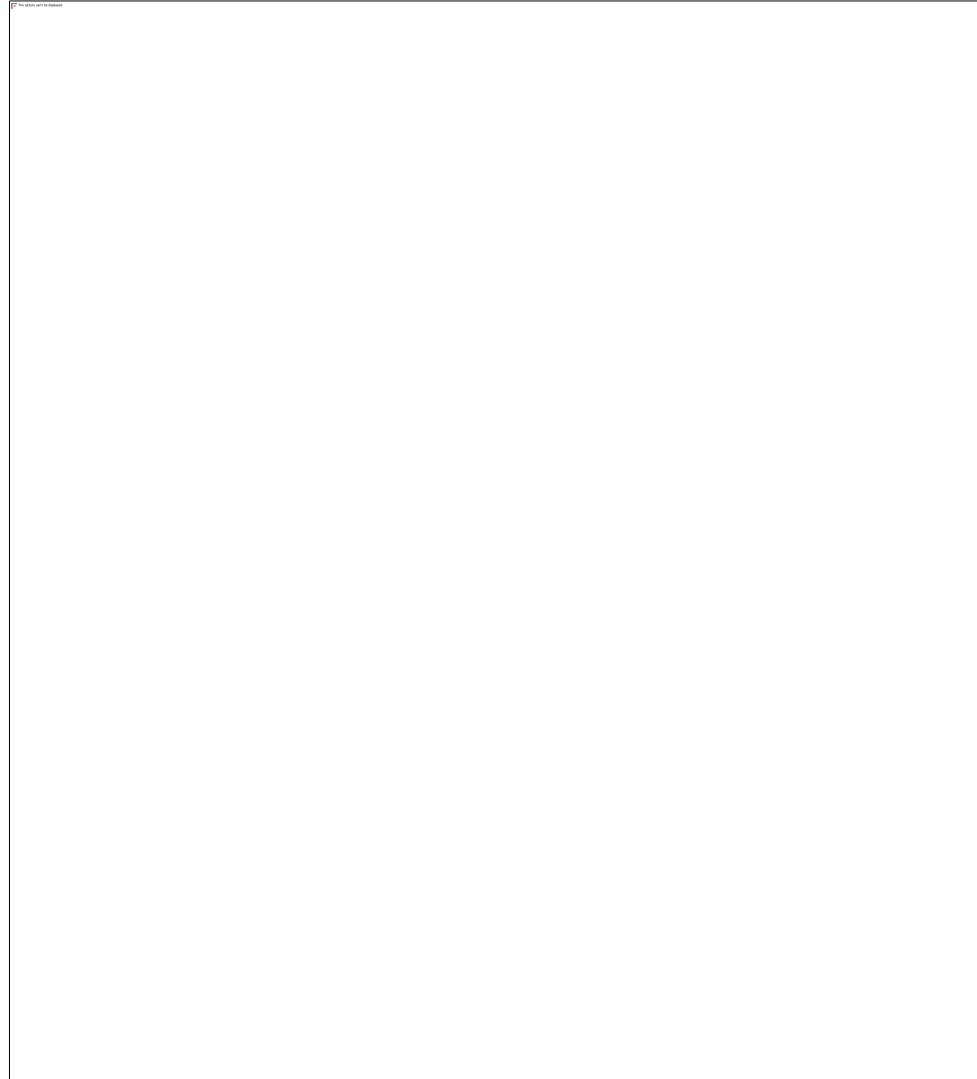
Debby: New Storm Site



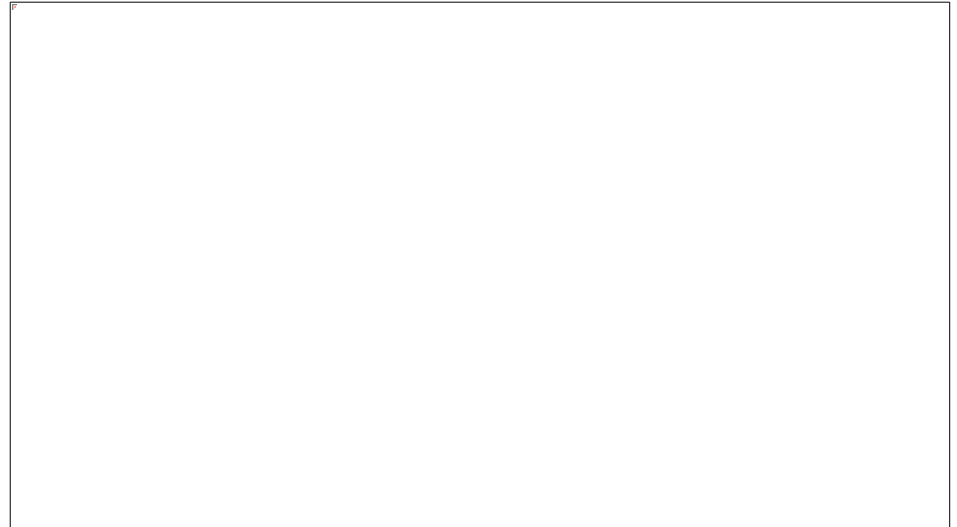
Debby: New Storm Site



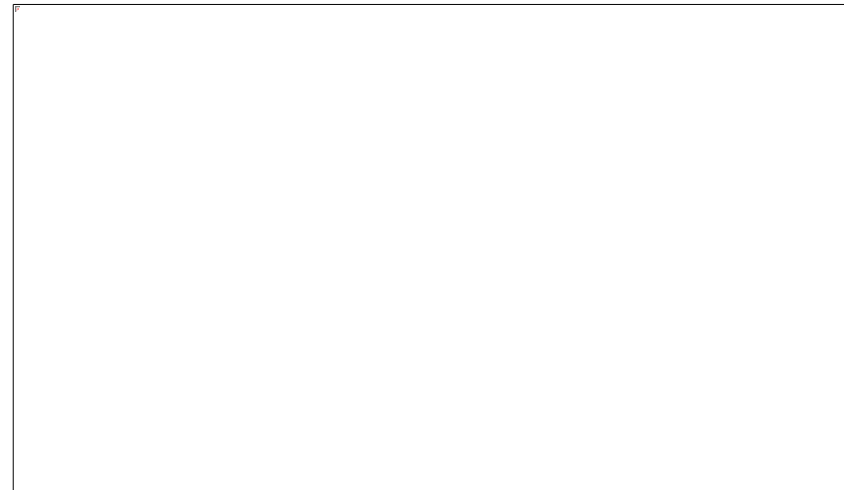
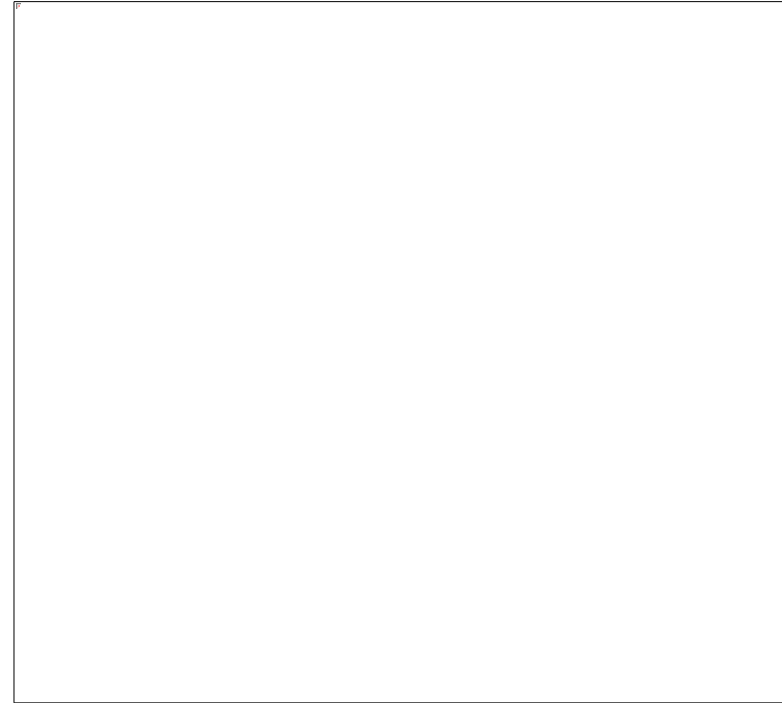
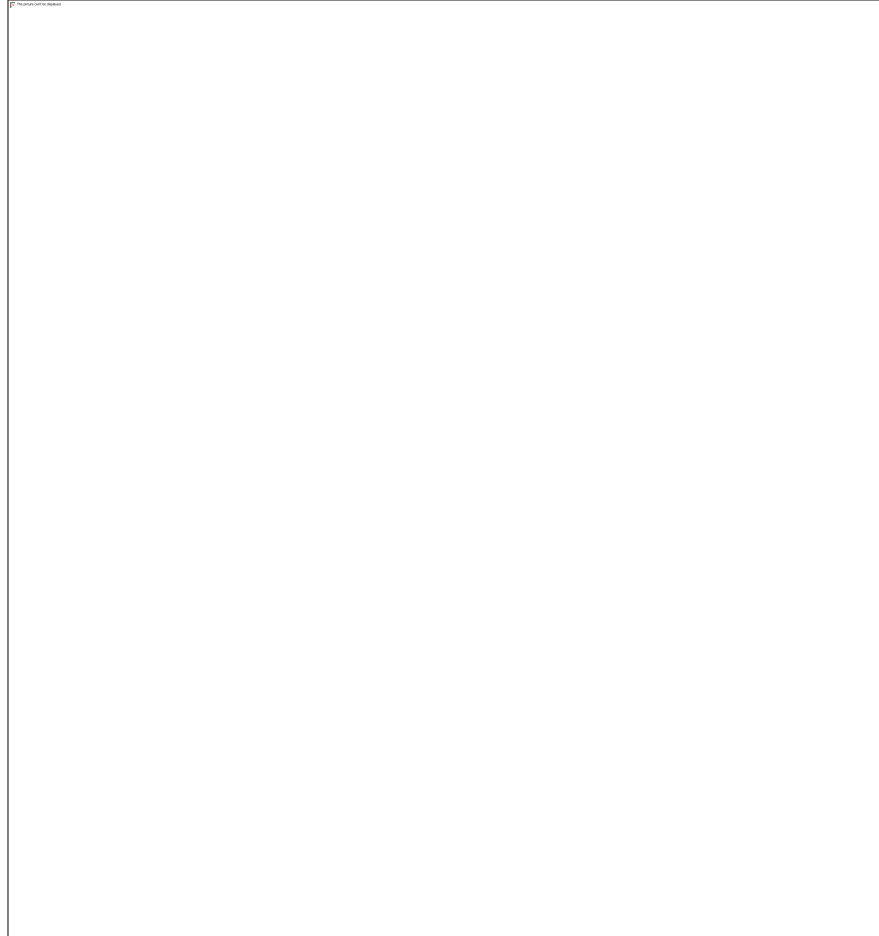
Debby: Cobranding With Public Safety



Debby: Video Updates

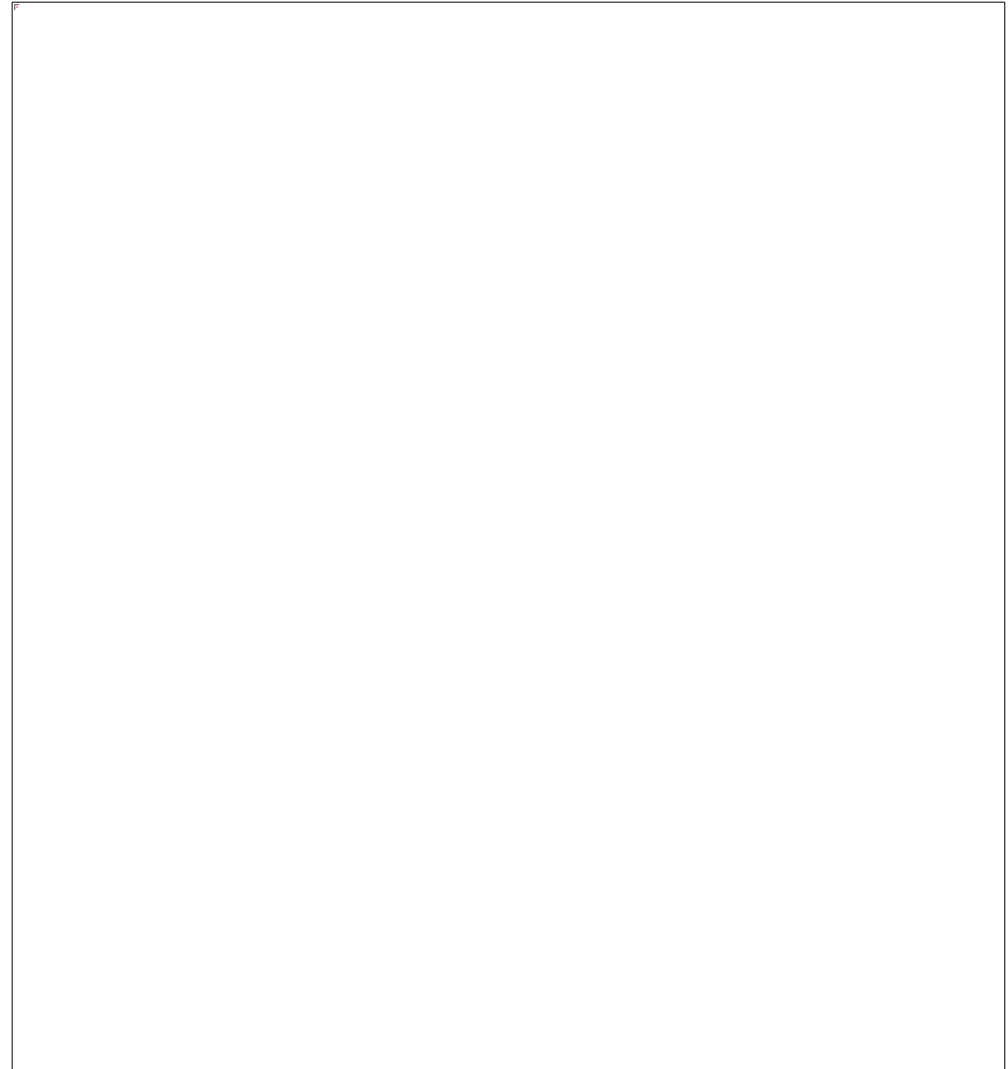
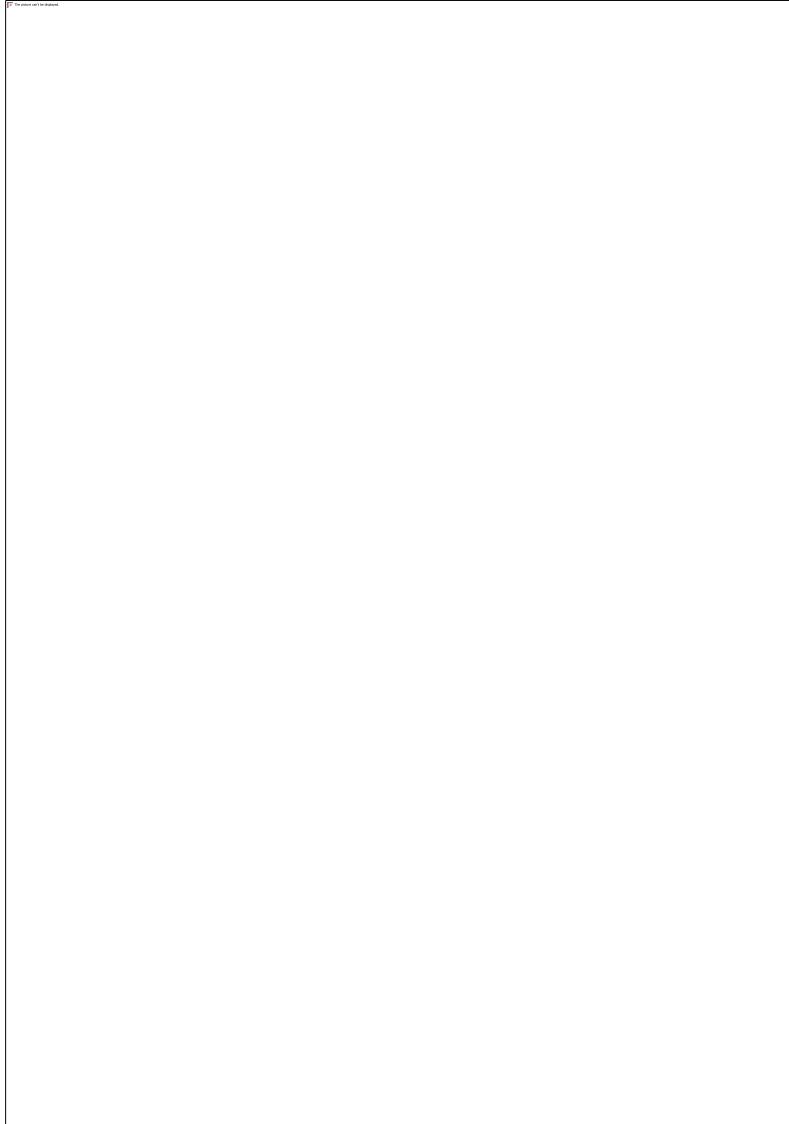


Debby: Use of Icons in Recovery



Debby: Stats/Performance

(over 1K sandbags delivered to at-risk homeowners)



ACTIVITY No. 2:

Rumor Control & Active Monitoring

The Challenge:

You have your comments turned off on your county Facebook page and a local neighborhood group starts posting updates about an issue with little to no information from all parties involved. Speculation is growing and the public is getting frustrated.

The Task:

You are tasked with creating a response from your main government page that addresses the issue without giving the rumor fuel.

The Scenario:

A key piece of infrastructure (your dam) functioned as it was supposed to, but since we have never experienced a storm of this capacity, the public is unaware of this feature. Communication goes out without the knowledge of the PIO causing panic to citizens. The government agency releases no information, has no comments on, and cannot address comments on other pages.

ACTIVITY No. 2:

Rumor Control & Active Monitoring

The Facts:

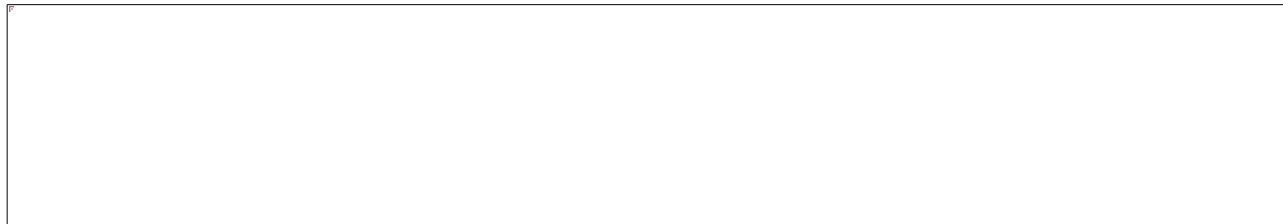
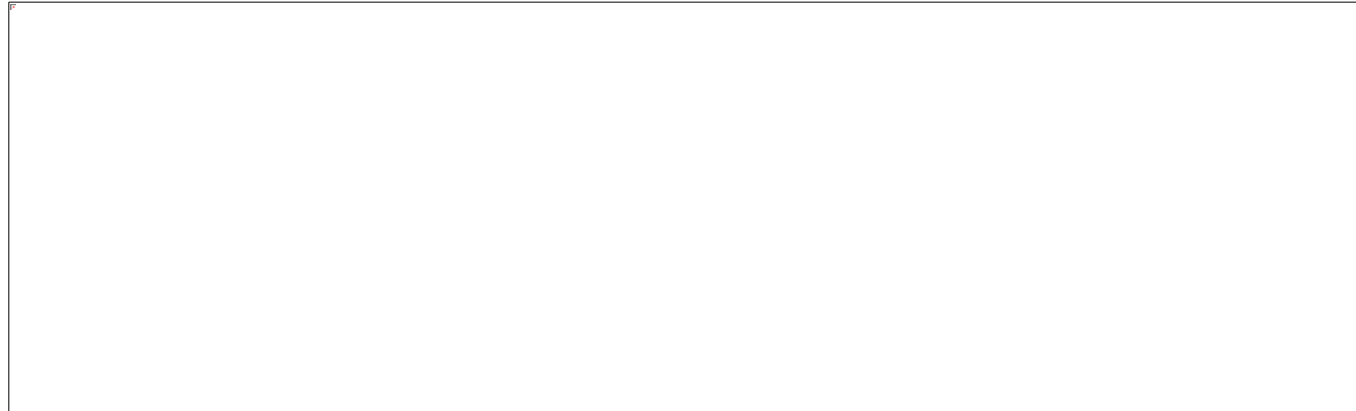
- An IPAWS message went out in a specified location, not the whole county, based off of the best available information at the time.
- Comms was initially unaware of message being sent
- The infrastructure functioned as it was designed (not a flood control structure)
- Residents who would be affected were contacted
- Local News stations are reporting inaccurate information from the public speculation on neighborhood Facebook group
- The county is answering all media inquiries to the best of their abilities
- We received 6 inches of rain in an hour on top of heavily saturated ground



ACTIVITY No. 2:

Rumor Control & Active Monitoring

Our Responses to Real-Life Situations:



2024: HURRICANE HELENE

Main Challenges:

- Restoring trust
- Getting details up faster
- Rumor control/misinformation
- Still no comments
- Some lift stations lost electricity
- The need to shut off water on the Island again!

Helene: Content Liaisons



Helene: Greater Flow of Content



HURRICANE HELENE UPDATE

FOR MORE UPDATES, VISIT:
[MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM](https://mymanatee.org/storm)
[@MANATEEGOV](https://www.facebook.com/ManateeCounty)

Lakewood Ranch Community Emergency Response Team and 30 others
20 shares

Like Comment Share



HURRICANE HELENE IMPACT

LET US KNOW YOUR UNMET NEEDS

mymanatee.org/storm

15
60 shares



SHELTERS ARE PET FRIENDLY

PETS MUST BE BROUGHT IN CRATES

[MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM](https://mymanatee.org/storm)



MANDATORY EVACUATIONS UPDATE

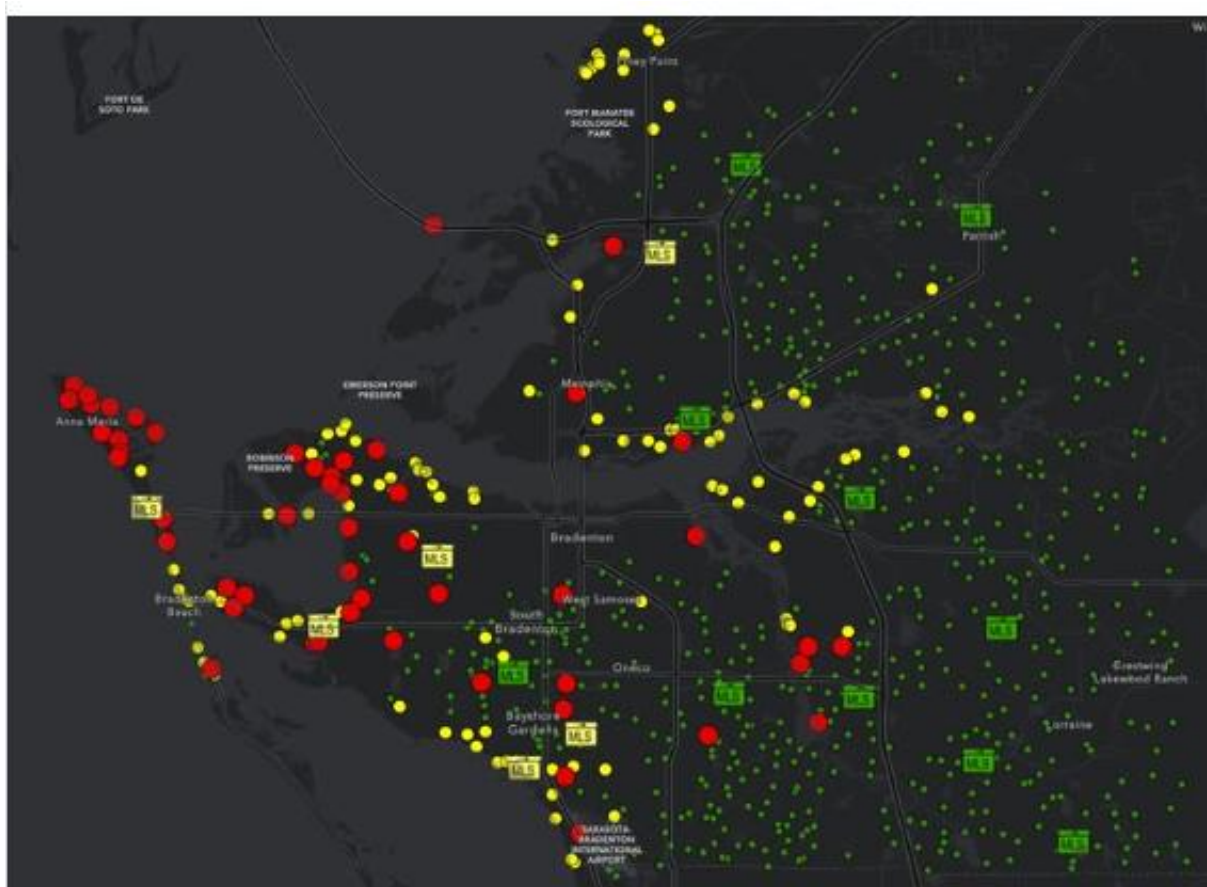
LEVEL A IS MANDATORY
MOBILE HOMES ARE MANDATORY
LEVEL B IS VOLUNTARY

KNOW YOUR LEVEL [MYMANATEE.ORG/MANATEEREADY](https://mymanatee.org/manateeready)

38
4 comments 44 shares

Like Comment Share

Helene: Implemented Peregrine

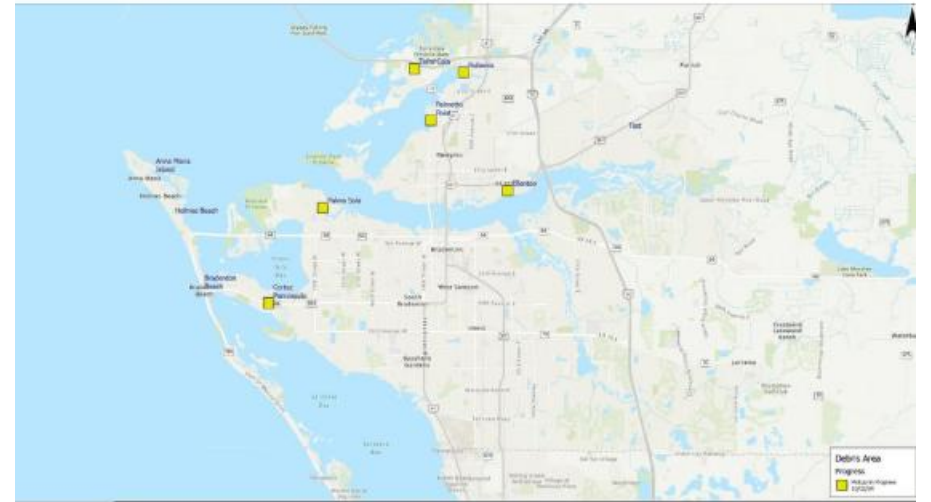


Lakewood Ranch Community Emergency Response Team and 457 others 1.1K shares

Like

Comment

Share



Manatee County Animal Welfare and 173 others

1 comment 91 shares

Like

Comment

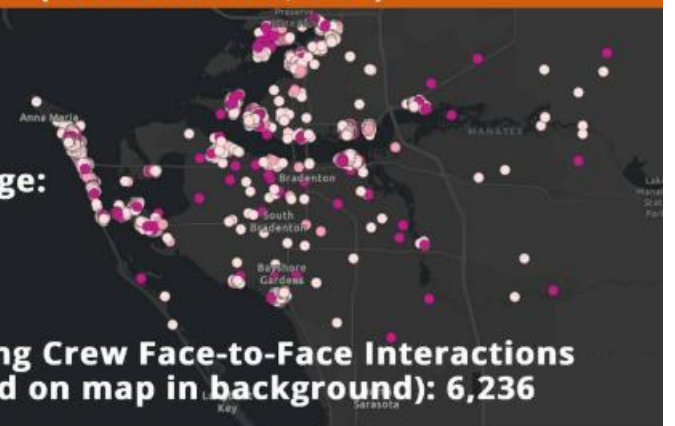
Share

MANATEE BY THE NUMBERS: HELENE RECOVERY (as of October 4, 2024)

311 Calls:
11,446

Total Tonnage:
1,857

Canvassing Crew Face-to-Face Interactions
(plotted on map in background): 6,236



George Kruse, Manatee County Commissioner and 64 others

7 shares

Helene: More Icons



HURRICANE HELENE UPDATE



TEMPORARY HOUSING ASSISTANCE

PLEASE CALL 

34 121 shares
Like Comment Share



CALLING FOR VOLUNTEERS

**OCT 1 - 3
8 AM - 5 PM
BRADENTON AREA
CONVENTION CENTER**

300 VOLUNTEERS NEEDED DAILY

MYMANATEE.ORG/HELENEVOLUNTEER

115 2 comments 310 shares



**FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
FEMA**



FEMA ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

-  **MEDICAL SUPPLIES**
-  **BABY FORMULA**
-  **WATER**
-  **FOOD**

SEE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ASSISTANCE HERE:

DISASTERASSISTANCE.GOV

Turning Points, UF IFAS Extension Manatee County and 48 others 140 shares
Like Comment Share



PERMITTING FEES WAIVED FOR HELENE DAMAGES

TO SEE THE FULL LIST OF WAIVED BUILDING PERMIT FEES VISIT:

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

34 29 shares

Helene: Started Using Ring



Create



HURRICANE HELENE UPDATE

**STORM SURGE PEAK
BETWEEN 10 PM AND MIDNIGHT**

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

Manatee County Public Safety Department

Weather

Storm Surge Update

Storm surge is forecasted to peak between 10:00 p.m. and midnight. Waters should then begin to recede after the surge peaks. Please follow trusted local news stations for updates and mymanatee.org/storm

Sep 26, 2024 at 9:19pm EDT

19



<https://neighbors.ring.com/n/Zwe8kyMU1z>

Copy Link

Get Help

Helene: Improved Municipality Coordination



Manatee County, Florida Government

Published by Mackenzie Lang · September 25, 2024

Manatee County Utilities will likely shut water off to the island cities of Anna Maria Island, Holmes Beach, Bradenton Beach, & the Town of Longboat Key before 6:00 A.M. Thursday, September 26, due to the anticipated high winds & potential storm surge, which could threaten the integrity of the water infrastructure. Water service will be restored as soon as conditions allow. CHECK mymanatee.org/storm for up-to-date info.



TEMPORARY POTABLE WATER SERVICE SUSPENSION

ANNA MARIA ISLAND, HOLMES BEACH, BRADENTON BEACH, AND THE TOWN OF LONGBOAT KEY

BEFORE 6 AM ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

47

55 shares

Like

Comment

Share



Helene: More Video & Reel Updates



2024: HURRICANE MILTON

Main Challenges:

- Clear separation from Helene to Milton
- Still no commenting (until OCT 10)
- Restoring trust
- Keeping up with demand for posts (every 15 minutes!)

Milton: Clear Storm Separation



48

40 shares

Manatee County, Florida Government
 Published by Kelly Foster · October 6, 2024 ·

We understand that many are still recovering from Helene, but due to impending impacts of Milton. Many recovery sites, such as comfort stations and Points of Distribution, may temporarily cease operations until it is safe to resume. Please monitor mymanatee.org/storm to stay up to date on the status of those sites.



35

21 shares



97

82 shares

Milton: Early, On-Target Messaging

Manatee County | MANATEE

! WATER SHUT OFF

ANNA MARIA ISLAND, HOLMES BEACH, BRADENTON BEACH, AND THE TOWN OF LONGBOAT KEY

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

94 157 shares

Like Comment Share

! MAJOR HURRICANE MILTON UPDATE

FOR MORE UPDATES, VISIT:
MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM
@MANATEEGOV

sheltered in place and keeping your family and yourself safe

55 4 comments 23 shares

Like Comment Share

Manatee County | MANATEE

! STORM UPDATE

LEVEL A, LEVEL B, MOBILE & MANUFACTURED HOMES EVACUTE

STARTING AT 2 PM ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 7

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

198 432 shares

Manatee County | MANATEE

! HURRICANE MILTON

! LAKE MANATEE DAM UPDATE

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

117 10 comments 62 shares

Milton: Icons for Everything!



UNPLUG YOUR ELECTRIC VEHICLE BEFORE THE STORM

EVACUATE WITH YOUR ELECTRIC VEHICLE & KEEP THEM AWAY FROM STRUCTURES

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

This advertisement features a background image of an electric car being charged in a garage. It includes a warning icon of a lightning bolt and a car, and a circular icon with an exclamation mark and a car. Logos for Manatee County and MyManatee.org are in the top left corner.



TRANSITIONAL HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Allows for temporary short-term accommodations for eligible survivors when other housing options are not available.

APPLY FOR FEMA INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE:

ONLINE ON THE APP CALL

FEMA

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

This advertisement shows a damaged building with debris. It features a circular icon with a house and a person. Below the text are three icons: a cursor arrow, a smartphone, and a telephone. Logos for Manatee County and FEMA are present.



OPERATION BLUE ROOF PROGRAM

Thursday, October 17

FREE TEMPORARY ROOF TARPING

9 AM - 5 PM
AT BRADEN RIVER LIBRARY
Talk to a Rep!

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

This advertisement features an aerial view of a house with a blue tarp on its roof. It includes a location pin icon and a clipboard icon. Logos for Manatee County and Operation Blue Roof are in the top left corner.



DON'T PUT DEBRIS IN FRONT OF BACKFLOWS, FIRE HYDRANTS OR MASTER METERS

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

This advertisement shows a grassy area with a fire hydrant and a master meter. It features a circular icon with a water tap and a warning sign. Logos for Manatee County and MyManatee.org are in the bottom right corner.



DISASTER RECOVERY CENTER

OPEN 7 AM - 7 PM

AT THE G.T. BRAY GYMNASIUM

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

FEMA

This advertisement shows the exterior of the G.T. Bray Gymnasium with an EMS van and a police car. It features a location pin icon and a building icon. Logos for Manatee County and FEMA are in the bottom right corner.



OUR BEACHES CONTINUE TO BE CLOSED DURING STORM RECOVERY

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

This advertisement shows a damaged structure on a beach. It features a circular icon with a warning sign and a crossed-out beach chair. Logos for Manatee County and MyManatee.org are in the top left corner.

Milton: Icons for Everything!

UPDATE !

BRIDGES CLOSED AS OF 7 AM TODAY

- JIM DAVIS ROAD AT GAMBLE CREEK
- GOLF COURSE ROAD AT GAMBLE CREEK
- VERNA BETHANY ROAD AT THE MANATEE RIVER

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

33 likes 44 shares

CONSERVE WATER !

- WASHING CLOTHES
- SHOWERING & BATHING
- WASHING DISHES
- DUMPING LIQUIDS DOWN HOUSEHOLD DRAINS

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

72 likes 3 comments 77 shares

DISASTER SURVIVOR ASSISTANCE CREWS !

CREWS SHOULD BE WEARING OR CARRYING IDENTIFYING INFORMATION WITH THEM

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

16 likes 28 shares

SEPARATE BUT DON'T BAG YOUR DEBRIS !

- CONSTRUCTION & HOME MATERIALS
- FALLEN PLANTS, BRANCHES & LEAVES
- APPLIANCES, GRILLS & AIR CONDITIONERS

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

ICE NOW AVAILABLE AT POD LOCATIONS

SEE OUR FULL LIST & WHAT ITEMS ARE AVAILABLE AT

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

STARTING THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17 !

RESIDENTIAL DEBRIS DROP-OFF SITE

UTILITIES FLEET FACILITY
4700 66TH ST. W., BRADENTON

7 AM - 7 PM 7 DAYS A WEEK

SEPARATE YOUR DEBRIS INTO CATEGORIES

I.D. REQUIRED FOR PROOF OF RESIDENCY

NO COMMERCIAL DROP-OFFS, BAGGED ITEMS, RESIDENTIAL GARBAGE, RECYCLING, OR HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE ACCEPTED

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

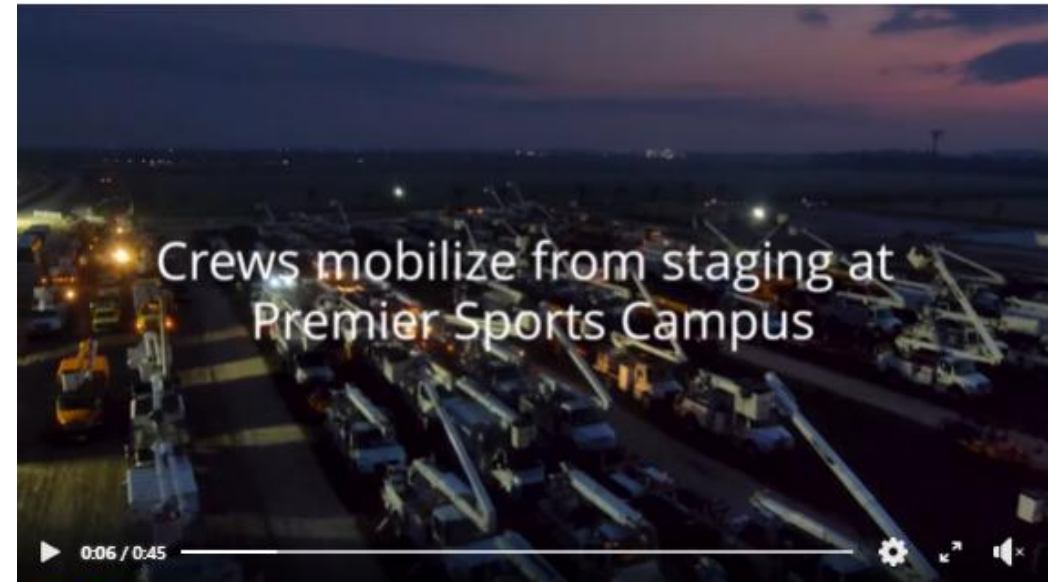
Milton: Continued Use of Videos & Reels



Manatee County, Florida Government
Published by Kelly Foster · October 16, 2024 ·

Let's take a moment to thank all of our local, regional and national partners for their tireless efforts to get Manatee County up and running again.

#Milton



1K likes 104 comments 142 shares

Like Comment Share

Milton: More Recovery Posts

TODAY'S TOTAL TRUCK LOAD PICKUPS
512

TOTAL TRUCK LOADS AS OF 10/29 AT 4:30 PM
9,904

WE ARE IN THIS FOR THE LONG HAUL

MYMANATEE.ORG/DEBRIS

The infographic features a map of Manatee County with numerous blue circular markers indicating debris pickup locations. A truck icon is positioned to the left of the central text. The Manatee County logo is in the bottom left corner.

Town of Longboat Key and 162 others

22 comments 36 shares

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Help us determine the needs of your home and/or neighborhood:

MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

The graphic has a dark blue background with a palm tree silhouette on the left. A white circular icon with a question mark and a clipboard is in the top left. The text is in white and orange.

52

49 comments 91 shares

FEMA APPLICATION DEADLINE

JANUARY 7, 2025

FOUR WAYS TO APPLY FOR ASSISTANCE:

- ONLINE
- FEMA APP
- CALL
- IN PERSON

DISASTERASSISTANCE.GOV

FEMA

The graphic features a background image of a building and palm trees. It includes icons for online, app, call, and in-person assistance. The FEMA logo is in the bottom right corner.

UF IFAS Extension Manatee County Family and Consumer Sciences and 16 others 22 shares

ACTIVITY No. 3: Decode the Disaster

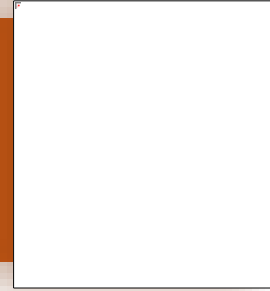
The Scenario:

Assume your audience is stressed, scrolling fast through social media, and not reading posts closely. Your job is to make the emergency understandable while only reading a handful of words someone reads a single word.

The Challenge:

Create a call-to-action graphic that reflects a real-life scenario of that disaster that warns the community and lets them know what they are expected to do.

ACTIVITY No. 3: Decode the Disaster



Reflection:

How difficult was it to come up with something off the top of your head, and create it from scratch in 5 minutes?

What do you think would help your group create these graphics faster?

New Task:

Now you can open the big envelope which has graphics our team uses. You get to remake these posts in 5 minutes using the elements however you would like, to speed up the process and allow you to focus on other aspects of this post.

PERFORMANCE

Manatee County, Florida Gov...
Published by Kelly Foster · October 9, 2024

These visuals show the potential storm-surge impact in Manatee County. The map shows the upper end of the current forecast of 15-foot storm surge, and the illustration ... [See more](#)



Understanding Storm Surge Flooding
Storm surge is destructive, life-threatening coastal flooding. It accounts for about half of the damage associated with tropical systems in the U.S. To help you determine the best way to prepare, NOAA coastal flooding forecasts are expressed in feet of water above ground level.

Greater than 9 feet
6-9 feet
3-6 feet
0-3 feet

552 24 1.2K

Like Comment Share

Impressions: 292,345

Manatee County, Florida Gov...
Published by Kelly Foster · October 7, 2024

Manatee County Emergency Management has expanded their evacuation orders in advance of Hurricane Milton. In addition to Levels A & B, along with RVs or Mobile Homes, Le... [See more](#)



HURRICANE MILTON UPDATE
LEVEL A, B & C EVACUATION
BEGINNING AT 2 PM ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 7
MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

241 1K

Like Comment Share

Impressions: 158,766

Manatee County, Florida Gov...
Published by Kelly Foster · October 10, 2024

Over half of Manatee County's traffic lights are not operating. We encourage you to stay at home while our repair teams continue to work their way around the county. If... [See more](#)



WHEN YOU APPROACH A NON-FUNCTIONAL TRAFFIC LIGHT, TREAT IT AS FOUR-WAY STOP
MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM


317 23 288

Like Comment Share

Impressions: 98,647

Manatee County, Florida Gov...
Published by Kelly Foster · October 10, 2024

Debris pickup begins tomorrow (Friday, October 11)! Please be sure to separate debris from your garbage and further separate debris into these 3 categories: vegetative ... [See more](#)



OUR Storm Debris Pickup Starts Tomorrow, Friday, Oct 11
MYMANATEE.ORG/STORM

198 46 312

Like Comment Share

Impressions: 51,874

PERFORMANCE



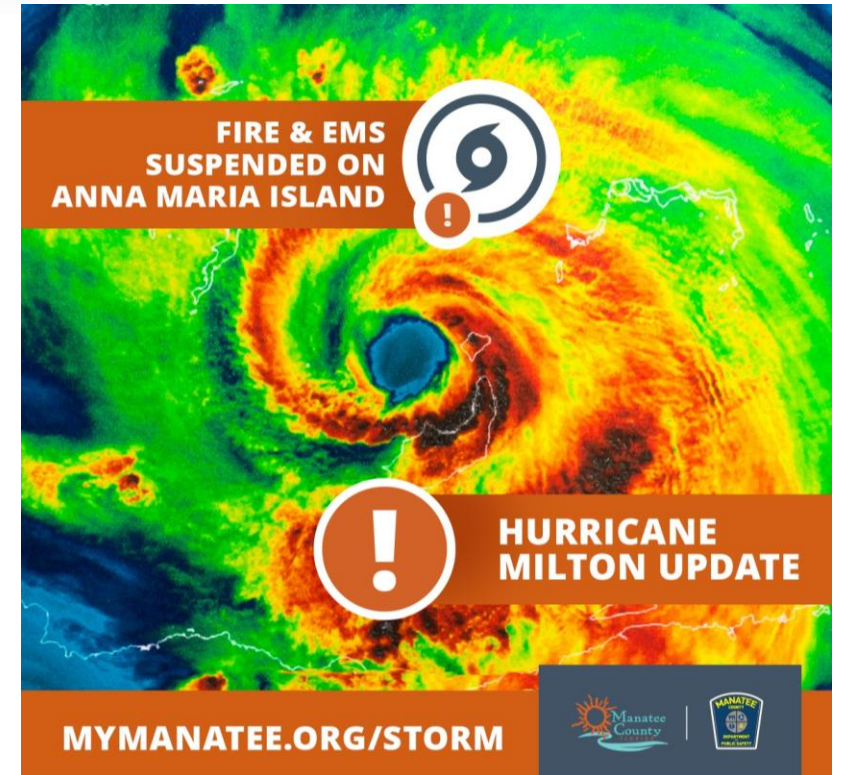
- 15,000 Facebook Followers
- 16 Million Impressions
- 400K Engagements
- 4 Million Video Views

MORAL OF THE SOCIAL STORY

**Just like no 2 STORMS are ever the same,
no 2 TEAMS are ever the same!**

TIPS

- Pre-planned posts
- Pre-storm template
- One URGENT (attention-getting) template (e.g. EMS Suspended)
- Post-storm template
- Post frequency: 2 days out, every hour; one day out, every half hour
- Plenty of recovery posts, especially debris
- QR Code to Amanda's "hurricane-ready" starter kit



STAY IN TOUCH

- **Kelly Foster, kelly.foster@mymanatee.org**
- **Mackenzie Lang, mackenzie.lang@mymanatee.org**
- **Amanda Hengst, amanda.hengst@mymanatee.org**