

August 2009



ST. LUCIE COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT

"Our Family Serving Yours"

Favorable Results come from Community Survey

A Community Survey was mailed out to 1,500 property owners last month with a total of 158 responses so far. The results show that those with prior contact with the Fire District give us an average rating of service of 4.8. This is on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest or best. Respondents were asked to rate the firefighters on: professionalism, visibility and accessibility. The results show that a rating of 4.9 was given on "professionalism & confidence" and a rating of 4.5 on "visible and accessible." Congratulations!

The survey also found that people do not seem to know or use our website and that several respondents were not aware of all of our Public Education offerings. So an effort is in the works to help better inform the public on both.

Firefighters will be asked to help by leaving a postcard with people they serve. It will ask some of the same questions, and give information about Public Education programs and the website. It will be a great way to "go above and beyond." The postcard will be at your stations soon!

To: The Troops

We would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest appreciation for your dedication and commitment to the community we serve. We have seen significant challenges over the past two years regarding our budgets and revenue. We are not alone and you all have recognized this and have stepped up to meet these challenges, and we appreciate this. We are not at the end of this economic turmoil.

We must continue to be conscientious in our efforts to be efficient and effective in the great services we provide.

Again, we must thank you all for being part of the solution to an ever challenging environment.

Sincerely,

Ron Parrish

Ron Parrish
Fire Chief

Tim Munson

Tim Munson
President Local #1377

Meet Your Fire Board – Doug Coward

In an effort to inform our employees about the Fire Board, *Fire Line* will highlight one of our Fire Board Commissioners in upcoming issues. To start the series we begin with the current Fire Board Chairman, Doug Coward.

Fire Board Chairman Doug Coward has been helping St. Lucie County plan its future since the early 1990s. Prior to moving to Florida in 1984 to attend Florida State University, he lived in Upstate New York for over a decade, and in Southeast Asia for several years. After graduating with a Masters Degree in Urban and Regional Planning, he relocated to St. Lucie County in 1991.

His first experience in politics came in his early twenties when he worked as an Environmental Planner for St. Lucie County. Coward was charged with finding a way to protect environmentally sensitive lands. He worked for more than a year with a group of citizens and land trusts to identify high priority environmental sites and to determine a means to preserve these ecological corridors. The committee eventually recommended a General Obligation Bond, which was brought to the voters and overwhelmingly approved in 1994. These local dollars have since been matched with state and federal conservation funds to set aside more than \$75 million of pristine natural areas, including property along the North Fork of the St. Lucie River, the Indian River Lagoon, Hutchinson Islands, and more.

Coward left his employment with St. Lucie County in 1995 to work as a Community Planner with 1000 Friends of Florida – a not-for-profit growth management advocacy group. He remained a resident of St. Lucie County, but worked throughout the Treasure Coast and Central Florida. One of his most rewarding assignments during this time was serving as the Project Manager for the Oxbow Eco-Center, which is an environmental education facility now located off St. James Drive in Port St. Lucie. As a Community Planner, he worked primarily to promote smart growth, sustainability, and more meaningful public participation.



(Story continues on next page)

Lil Feet

The Fire District will be “adopting” day care children who need shoes and socks for the upcoming school year. We are working with the Early Learning Coalition to identify toddlers in need. A flyer with all the details will be distributed soon.

August Birthdays

ASCANI, MICHAEL L
 BATOR, RYAN S
 BAUMKER, DANIEL J
 BAYONA JR, JESUS M
 BRADY, MICHAEL K
 BROWN, LAURA E
 CANTALINE, STACIE B
 CHOI, TAT F
 CLANTON, JOSEPH L
 CONEY, MATTHEW J
 DASHNER, BRADLEY J
 EDWARDS, JAMES W
 ESKEW, DAVID K
 GARCIA, ROMAN
 GLADWIN, THOMAS W
 GRACE, MICHAEL J
 HILL, EDWARD W
 KEMP JR, JOHNNIE D
 LANGEL, MATTHEW S
 LONGCHAMPS, RONALD A
 MAXWELL, MICHAEL J
 MAYR, KENNETH
 MEADOWS, LISA H
 MELE, DAVID H
 MELE, HANK M
 NORVELL SR, ROBERT W
 NOTTAGE, DONOVAN B
 RESCH, MATTHEW G
 SMITH, GAVIN A
 SMITH, PAUL A
 WARE, RILEY T
 WEISS, MICHAEL F
 WHITESIDE, JASON M
 WILLIAMS, RICHARD A
 WOZAR, JOHN D

Meet Your Fire Board – Doug Coward (continued)

After more than a decade working with elected officials and being involved in the political process, he soon realized that he could make more of an impact as a County Commissioner. So, newly married and at the age of 31, he decided to run for the St. Lucie County Commission. He described his youthful exuberance as “being more interested in trying than failing.” He was first elected to the St. Lucie County Commission in 1998. Coward has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the prestigious “Elected Official of the Year in Florida” award from the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association. Coward said, “I enjoy being a County Commissioner because I can really get things done and make a difference in our community.” Coward said he is particularly interested in diversifying the tax base, creating more quality jobs, and promoting clean industry and green sector economic development opportunities.

Over the last 11 years, Coward has found being a County Commissioner both challenging and rewarding. He says he particularly likes the diversity of issues that the Board works on and the fact that he is typically learning something new every day. He notes that the Fire Board has been especially challenging because of the complexity and magnitude of the issues involved. Coward points out that the learning curve for a new Fire Board member is head and shoulders above any other committee assignment. He admits that he was initially overwhelmed and that the education process continues to this day.

Coward sees the Fire Board as evolving over the years to become better informed on the issues at hand, more involved with long-term planning, and receptive to innovative new ideas. He recently participated in the strategic planning process with staff and has urged the Fire Board members to become directly involved in helping to implement this new strategic plan. He says it has been an honor to serve on the Fire Board and he is especially gratified with the recent Union renegotiations.

“I want to thank all of the Union members for recognizing the challenging economic times and budgetary constraints that this Nation, our County, and this Fire District are experiencing, and specifically for being a part of the solution,” said Coward. “I am very proud to be part of the Fire District and to work with a team of employees who not only risk their lives for others but are willing to make personal financial sacrifices to help their community.”

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Schedule an Appointment

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Congratulations to recently Released Paramedics:
 Sam Smith
 Kelly Cochran
 Tat Choi

Congratulations to recently Certified Pension Trustees
 April Maya
 Carl Trabulsy
 Ken Crooks