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Lee County Department of Community Development makes operational adjustments to further assist residents post-Hurricane Ian

Fort Myers, FL, Jan. 19, 2023 – Lee County Department of Community Development is making operational adjustments to further assist residents of unincorporated areas who are rebuilding and repairing their homes in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian.

The adjustments apply to two locations.

Pine Island:

Community Development is extending Wednesday service for Matlacha-Pine Island residents.

The department opened a weekly remote permit office at the Pine Island Public Library, 10701 Russell Road, Bokeelia, beginning Jan. 4 to allow residents to obtain permits for repairs to existing buildings damaged by Hurricane Ian.

Due to the use of the service by island residents the past three Wednesdays, county staff will continue to be at the library four additional Wednesdays – Jan. 25, Feb. 1, Feb. 8 and Feb. 15. Hours at the remote permit office will remain the same, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Residents acting as their own contractor can submit permit applications, have them reviewed and issued from the remote office. The applicants need only a description of the work and their address and staff will walk them through the process.

The remote permit office is in response to Pine Island residents requesting to have staff readily accessible to help them navigate the permit process, as many residences are without internet service. Hired contractors are asked to continue to use the existing electronic permitting process. Residents seeking a full demolition or complete replacement of a structure still need to visit the main Department of Community Development permitting office at 1500 Monroe St., Fort Myers.

Downtown Fort Myers main office:

The permitting lobby for the Department of Community Development, 1500 Monroe St., Fort Myers, will be closed to the public Wednesday, Jan. 25, and Wednesday, Feb. 1, to address workload, although phone services will be available 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. while the lobby is closed.

The permitting lobby had expanded hours of operation beginning Oct. 17 to assist homeowners with emergency permits to address damage from Hurricane Ian. However, the volume of building permit applications currently being submitted, both hurricane repair-related and regular permits, has led to a backlog in both the processing and review functions. In addition, a large number of e-mails and phone calls are received daily, leading to delayed responses and inhibiting permit processing. The planned closures will allow time for staff to address the backlog. These closures follow two previously announced closures on Jan. 11 and Jan. 18 for the same purpose.

Lobby hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays, with phone availability 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily, with the exceptions noted above. County staff request that contractors continue to file for permits using the county's online system at www.leegov.com/dcd.

Additional Wednesday closures may be considered as needed if the backlog persists. Watch for updates at www.leegov.com.

General information:

Department of Community Development information can be found at www.leegov.com/dcd or by calling 239-533-8585.

Information and resources related to Lee County's Hurricane Ian response can be found at www.leegov.com/storm.

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