## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of County Commissioners</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Team</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Health &amp; Safety</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Communications</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal &amp; Emergency Services</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget &amp; Sales Tax Highlights</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service Improvements</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping Our Community</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to Red Tide</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livable Manatee</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investing in Parks</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing for the Future</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving a Growing Community</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Annual Report gives an overview of the exceptional accomplishments our County Government achieved over the past year. It is also the County Administrator’s opportunity to highlight some of the 1,800 county government representatives who serve this community throughout the year, many times without recognition.

Welcome

It is impossible to list each great accomplishment that our County Government made in the community over the past year. Nor can I adequately express my appreciation for the 1,800 employees who work day in and day out to make Manatee County Florida’s finest local government. Much of what we have achieved is thanks to 12 department directors. They are the exceptional team of leaders who make great things possible through their leadership, dedication and support of our ACE philosophy that emphasizes Accountability, Civility and Ethics.

Much of what we have done over the past year would not have been possible without Deputy County Administrators Dan Schlandt and Cheri Coryea who during her first year as a deputy administrator again proved herself to a strong leader in this government and capable of added responsibility at each stop in her career here. Cheri, Dan and interim Deputy County Administrator John Osborne make personal sacrifices by working many long hours to make this organization run so smoothly. They are the elite group whose daily work and dedication set a tremendous example for our employees to follow.

Finally, thanks to our seven County Commissioners for their ongoing guidance and for the support of the amazing staff that serves this great community. This is a cohesive Board that enables Manatee County to be a regional leader in service delivery to the County’s 385,000 year-round residents.

Ed Hunzeker
County Administrator
Board of County Commissioners

The Board of County Commissioners is comprised of seven members. Five members are elected from single-member districts, and two are elected county-wide.

DISTRICT 1
Priscilla Trace

DISTRICT 2
Reggie Bellamy

DISTRICT 3
Stephen R. Jonsson

DISTRICT 4
Misty Servia

DISTRICT 5
Vanessa Baugh

AT LARGE
Carol Whitmore

AT LARGE
Betsy Benac

In 2018, Commissioners Reggie Bellamy and Misty Servia were elected to Districts 2 and 4, replacing Commissioners Charles Smith and Robin DiSabatino.
Executive Team

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
Ed Hunzeker

Ed Hunzeker was appointed County Administrator in November 2006. He brought to Maratee County a mantra of accountability, civility and ethics, ushering in a more businesslike, customer-friendly county government. He values creative employees who aren’t afraid to take risks.

With a solid background in finance and experience serving as a County Administrator for two other Florida counties, Ed’s tenure at Manatee County has been an unprecedented period of change for local government.

DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
Dan Schlandt

Dan Schlandt was named Deputy County Administrator in December 2006. His primary areas of responsibility are in the areas of growth and development including planning, building, infrastructure planning, public works and economic development.

DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
Cheri Coryea

Cheri Coryea has 28 years of experience, with 26 years in management with Maratee County. She has held the position of department director of Neighborhood Services for the past 10 years and serving as an Acting Deputy County Administrator.
Public safety and law enforcement consume roughly one quarter of the County’s annual budget each year. The County Commission’s vision for the community, empowerment of our workforce and investments in the Public Safety Department have enabled the Public Safety team to become one of Florida’s leaders in the area of emergency preparedness and response.

In recent years under the leadership of Director Bob Smith our Public Safety Department of 290 employees has become a state leader on many fronts. Last January, the Florida Beach Patrol Chiefs Association awarded its most prestigious award, Beach Patrol of the Year, to Manatee County Beach Patrol Division. The award recognizes the best agency in the industry for its elite public service to the community. It was an outstanding honor for Chief Joe Westerman and his crew of 16 lifeguards who keep our public beaches safe for the 2.8 million people a year who visit them.

In its second full year, Public Safety’s innovative team in the Community Paramedicine division worked with local patients to keep them out of the emergency room and helped to divert more than $1.4 million in healthcare costs through preventative care. Those efforts were recognized by the Florida Department of Health when the state agency named Manatee County Community Paramedicine Chief Jimmy Crutchfield as the recipient of the 2018 EMS Injury Prevention Award.

Did You Know?
900 calls for ambulances and 700 trips to the hospital that have been diverted by Community Paramedics since the program began in 2016.
Public Safety

Emergency Communications

Manatee County Emergency Communications Division employees answer thousands of 9-1-1 calls each year and continued to use cutting-edge technology to improve service last year. An international accreditation agency awarded our Emergency Communication Center (ECC) with its annual public safety Communications Technology Leadership award. Over the past 12 months, under the leadership of Chief Jake Saur, our Emergency Communication Center accomplished great things:

- ECC became the second agency in Florida to roll out technology that allows outside alarm monitoring companies such as Brinks and Vector to send information directly to call takers in the 9-1-1 Call Center, saving up to three minutes from call processing time.

- The ECC and local fire districts launched Pulsepoint, a free mobile app that alerts citizens trained in CPR when someone in a nearby public place experiences a cardiac arrest. 9-1-1 operators now send alerts through the app at the same time they dispatch first responders to the scene. The app also notifies users of the closest available automated external defibrillator (AED).

- Manatee County ECC gave callers even more options in 2018 by offering text-to-911 service. Now, the hearing impaired or those who are someplace they cannot talk can text their emergencies to get help from Manatee County first responders.

Did You Know?

Manatee County Emergency Communications Center processes 222,000 9-1-1 calls each year.
Animal Services Chief Sarah Brown along with her staff and some of the most dedicated volunteers in the County helped achieve the County Commission’s goal of a 90 percent save rate for healthy, adoptable animals over the past fiscal year. That’s a significant accomplishment considering the record numbers of dogs and cats that passed through our Animal Services shelter during that period.

Last year we also made significant advancements with Sarasota County in the construction of a new regional public safety radio tower system that replaces obsolete equipment with new technology giving police, paramedics, firefighters and other first responders a far more reliable way to communicate during emergencies each day. Those upgrades would not have been possible without the tireless work of our Information Technology Department under the leadership of Paul Alexander and the expertise of Willie Miranda.

Public Safety’s innovative approach and recent success is thanks in large part to County Commissioners who have consistently made public safety their top priority. This year’s budget continued that commitment to creating a safer community by adding 12 new Sheriff’s Office Deputies to patrol a fast-growing population. Commissioners also took action to improve the security in areas our public uses most by approving funding for contracted security services in Manatee County’s most popular parks.

Download the PulsePoint app to add the location of AEDs around Manatee County and receive alerts when there’s a cardiac emergency happening nearby.
Budget & Sales Tax Highlights

2018 was the first year Manatee County began to see the benefits of 2016’s voter-approved infrastructure sales tax. G.T. Bray Park’s popular dog park was expanded and now extends to three shaded areas. Manatee County Property Management group under the leadership of Director Charlie Bishop and Project Manager Michael DiPinto oversaw renovations to the Department of Health building to upgrade the Medical Examiner’s Office. That project created space for a new EMS station in the heart of Bradenton for quick responses to many downtown emergencies.

Our Budget Office, with meticulous oversight by Financial Management Director Jan Brewer and Budget Manager Sheila Ballesteros, presented County Commissioners with another sustainable budget last year. The budget meets many needs of a growing community but also setting aside some revenue growth for one-time expenditures in expectation that voters would approve the additional homestead exemption on last fall’s ballot. However, the amendment fell short of approval, meaning some additional funding will be available in the 2019 budget to address some of the many requests that come before the Commission each year.

So many people make our county government operate smoothly outside of the spotlight, such as the County’s award-winning Procurement office. The procurement team works with County staff and the business community to ensure public funds are spent appropriately when we need to buy goods or services. Procurement Official Theresa Webb has placed a renewed emphasis on customer service in recent years and last year the division received its fourth Achievement of Excellence in Procurement award from the National Procurement Institute.

Did You Know?

In 2019, the voter approved infrastructure sales tax will go to replace aging lifeguard towers at public beaches. As the towers are completed later in the year, the County will also add six lifeguards to patrol our public beaches.
Customer Service Improvements

Last year Manatee County made strides in customer service by implementing new technology through the web. A collection of new online options are making our government more transparent and accessible than ever. Last February, the Building and Development Services Department rolled out a new Online Services tool that allows customers to apply for permits, licenses, planning and zoning from their home computer or even mobile device. For the first time ever, Building Department customers can track their project’s progress from submittal to approval without even having to come into our offices.

The new system would not have been possible without perseverance from John Barnott, Gianna Campana, Diana Morrissey, Jennifer Baird and Lacy Pritchard and to Information Technology’s Susan Kulbersh. Online improvements and the sheer volume of building permits coming into the Building Department enabled the Commissioners to lower many permitting fees for the fourth time in six years during 2018, this time by 30 percent.

Last June Manatee County launched a redesigned county website that makes finding government information far easier than ever before. The site is easy to use and you can easily find what you’re looking for using a computer or mobile device. The new site was made possible through the hard work of Rachael Taft, Matt Arriaga, Seth Scott, Sue Gulch, Paul Alexander, Nick Azzara and many others.

The new site paves the way for other web-based tools such as the new Resident Information Tool to easily find trash and recycling days, or your nearest neighborhood park. A new Emergency Information Center allows residents to find their evacuation level, evacuation routes, and view the location and status of the County’s sandbag distribution and emergency shelters. An online Road Closures tool includes an interactive map and table of current and upcoming closures.

Did You Know?
Improved efficiencies with department and online initiatives have led to a 52 percent reduction in most permitting fees since 2012.
Helping Our Community

Manatee Libraries continued its long run of excellence last year earning two more statewide honors. The Florida Library Association presented its Libraries Mean Business Award to our local team for providing excellent programs and resources for local businesses and job seekers. The Association also presented the Manatee Library System with its Library Innovation Award on for the 805 Literary and Arts Journal, Florida’s first public library-generated community journal.

Braden River Branch Supervisor Cathy Laird topped off another amazing year for our Library System when she was named 2018 Employee of the Year. In nearly 20 years with Manatee Libraries Cathy has proven herself a dedicated, responsible, patient and caring team member. She exemplifies the ACE philosophy daily!

Simone Peterson, Ogden Clark, Debbie Deleon and John Osborne hosted community meetings and collected public feedback as part of our Back to the Future conversation about how the community will change over the next decade and beyond. That team put in countless hours – many of them in the evening – to visit neighborhood groups and homeowner associations to ask our residents exactly what they want from Manatee County for the future.

Veteran Services Officer Lee Washington helped Manatee County achieve designation as a Purple Heart Community. Using donations from the Wounded Warriors Foundation Lee worked with Property Management’s Charlie Bishop and Tim Funk to install 50 reserved parking spaces for Purple Heart recipients at county facilities. These spots are a public reminder of our appreciation for those who sacrificed so much for our freedom. Veterans Services also opened two satellite offices in Ellenton and on Anna Maria Island in 2018.

Did You Know?

Manatee Libraries opened Area 52 last year, providing a STEAM lab for creative and active learning. They’ve also started making many unexpected items available for checkout, such as cake pans, telescopes and fishing poles. Creative thinking has kept us on the cutting edge as a community learning and gathering place.
Responding to Red Tide

Manatee County avoided direct threats from hurricanes in 2018, but we were challenged with a different kind of natural disaster. A slow moving red tide bloom prompted an extraordinary response from our Parks and Property Management teams. In August, the routine daily cleanup of public beaches took a turn. During the hottest part of the year, Property Management teams, led by Parks and Grounds manager Carmine Demilio and Grounds supervisor Liza Click began working from sun up to sun down to clean our beaches and parks from the marine life washing ashore from the red tide.

Midway through the effort we expanded cleanup operations and, under the leadership of Damon Moore, a vendor began cleaning hard hit residential waterways. Property Management maintenance crews worked with local HOA presidents to distribute dumpsters, nets and buckets where they were needed most. Kaycee Ellis and other team members from the County Administrator’s Office along with Human Resources, Public Safety and various other departments, answered thousands of red tide hotline calls that came in over six weeks’ time. Information Outreach oversaw the public information campaign to keep our public well informed of red tide information and assistance. Information Outreach also worked closely with DEP and Financial Management to secure a state grant for $500,000 to assist with cleanup costs.

In total, Manatee County employees removed 316 tons of debris during the severe red tide boom. The dedicated men and women of those cleanup teams worked in extreme temperatures, and endured sights and smells no one wants to encounter. They worked into the night and on weekends to do their part in keeping our beaches pristine. The red tide cleanup effort is a prime example of the perseverance and dedication our workforce shows in a year.
The Convention and Visitors Bureau and others led marketing efforts to drive business to the coastal restaurants hit hardest by the economic downturn resulting from red tide bloom off of the Gulf.

During the height of the red tide bloom, a team from Manatee County Redevelopment and Economic Opportunity, led by Director Geri Lopez, went door-to-door speaking with Island-based business owners to hear their concerns and to share information on federal government assistance available to suffering businesses. They worked with Neighborhood Services to host the Small Business Administration office at the Island Branch Library for local business owners to register their losses with the state.

Local tourism numbers remained strong despite the impact red tide had on many of our residents and businesses. Visitation to our area continued to climb during the last fiscal year when visitors increased by 4 percent over the prior year. Those extra visitors helped generate more than 10 percent more tourism revenue taxes last year.

The Bradenton Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, under the strong leadership of Elliott Falcione, has diversified our area and we're no longer so reliant on strong visitation numbers to our Island communities. Last year Elliott, Sean Walter and the CVB team helped attract almost 100 major sporting events to Manatee County. Those events bring hundreds and sometimes thousands of family members and spectators to Manatee County, sometimes from locations across the world. Even more events are planned in 2019.
In 2018 the Building and Development Services team of Lisa Barrett and Margaret Tussing served up revisions to modernize the County’s land development code. One facet of that project was the Board’s new Livable Manatee Incentive Program created by Redevelopment and Economic Opportunity Director Geri Lopez and Housing and Community Development Manager Denise Thomas.

Working to change longstanding codes and to combat rising home sale prices in our area has made Livable Manatee a notable achievement that did not come easily. The program is working to create affordable homes for low and moderate income families who want to establish roots here. Incentives for 10 projects were approved in 2018 and more are on the way.

Economic Development Official Karen Stewart worked with the Bradenton Area Economic Development Council again last year to attract prospective business owners to the area. Under Karen’s leadership last year, County Commissioners adopted $234,000 in incentives to bring nearly 279 high wage jobs to our area. The 10 businesses that received those incentives are projected to invest $24.6 million in capital improvements here in coming years.

Did You Know?

Since adopting Livable Manatee in 2018, the County Commission has approved $141,000 in incentives for 10 homes that will be sold affordably to low to moderate income households.
Investing in Parks

Last February we managed to improve upon one of Manatee County’s greatest assets, Robinson Preserve. The Mosaic Center for Nature, Exploration, Science and Technology — The NEST for short — opened last year as a beautiful new elevated tree house education center for environmental programs and educational courses for the public. Last year we also completed the Robinson Preserve expansion with new canoe launches, mangrove islands, trails, ponds and restored wetlands. More is coming in 2019 when another 150 acres of abandoned farmland is transformed into a quality coastal habitat.

Robinson Preserve wasn’t the only park improvement last year. Alan Lai Hipp, the County’s Environmental Program manager, worked with Tom Yarger in Property Management on a nine-month renovation of the popular North Coquina boat ramp. The improvements greatly expanded boating access and trailer parking. Similar upgrades are coming to the boat ramp at Palma Sola Causeway which became a County boat ramp in early 2019.

Local parks and preserves offer unique benefits to public health, the environment, the economy and local property values. The County Commission is ready to leave an incredible legacy in the areas of parks and recreation as we implement the Parks Master Plan in 2019.
Preparing for the Future

Florida is in the midst of another period of more frequent and intense storms. The Public Works department, the County’s second largest department, plays a key role during storm preparedness. Last year with County Commission funding, Public Works purchased five new sandbagging machines that have already helped to distribute sandbags to the public much more efficiently and with less staff power than in the past. The new equipment was one of the first projects Chad Butzow oversaw as interim director following the retirement of longtime director Ron Schulhofer.

Although we have strong leadership in Public Works when hurricanes approach, the County must become better positioned to handle the local flooding that often comes when there are intense rains for hours or days at a time. Our Public Works maintenance crews oversee more than 503 miles of stormwater pipes, 655 miles of roadside ditches, 181 miles of canals and much, much more.

Adding more people to the mix will only go so far to address flooding in low-lying areas. During the coming year the County will hold public discussions on a potential stormwater fee to determine if and how it will help prevent local flooding. Commissioners will be tasked with deciding the appropriate amount to charge and who will pay a stormwater fee. Public Works will need to prioritize which flood control projects will provide the most benefit to the largest number of residents.

Did You Know?

During 2018, Manatee County Public Works maintained 51,736 traffic signs, cleaned 171,542 feet of roadside ditches, and cleared 1,000 inlets.
LOOKING AHEAD

Serving a Growing Community

In September of 2018 the County purchased nearly 75 acres north of the Premier Sports Campus. In a few years that property will become a government services center with park amenities, a library and buildings for government services. That purchase was a significant step that Commissioners made over the past year in the County’s goal to bring government to the fast-growing areas of east Manatee County.

Progress on 44th Avenue advanced closer to Interstate 75 over the past year. We completed permitting for the section over the Braden River. Construction on that section should begin in 2019. Design and permitting are currently underway for the final segment which will extend from 44th Avenue Plaza East to Lakewood Ranch Boulevard, crossing I-75. The entire roadway will connect Lakewood Ranch to west Bradenton by 2024.

Moving to the population center of the County will make government services more accessible, efficient and effective for our fastest growing areas. In 2019 the County will work with a design consultant who will make space and service recommendations that will provide the best value for our tax paying customers. No less important is a growing need to plan for new facilities for staff and field operations in the new growing areas of the County.

Time is also quickly approaching to identify a new site for a County landfill that will be needed within the next 25 years. Identifying space and beginning to plan for a new landfill is not an easy process. It will require special permitting and space for buffering and landscaping around the property.
LOOKING AHEAD

As we continue to grow as a community and strive to improve the services we provide the public, there are other strategic decisions to make in 2019 and beyond.

In the coming year County Commissioners should also begin to have public conversations about how our local government will address the business relationship for water resources government has with three of our Island cities. Sometime soon, the Commission will need to have public conversations about the whether and how to transition those cities to a master meter arrangement similar to the agreements the County has with the cities of Bradenton, Palmetto and Longboat Key.

The County’s Animal Shelter in Palmetto is consistently at capacity and often overcrowded. The building’s electrical capacity cannot be expanded economically. In 2019 we will continue working toward a public-private partnership to build a new, expanded animal shelter facility that will accommodate more animals while meeting high standards of an animal-loving community.

In recent years the County has hardened public buildings and public spaces, but a more holistic approach to security at government facilities is needed in a way that does not create an undue inconvenience for taxpayers. Manatee County Public Safety Department has undertaken a study on how to improve building and employee security throughout the County.

As communities north of the Manatee River continue to grow, Commissioners have a greater need to connect Palmetto to Parrish. They’ll need to decide how to fund the next east-west corridor in northern Manatee County. They’ll also decide where the job centers in North Manatee will be located.

In 2019 a consultant is expected to deliver recommendations on how to jumpstart business in northern Manatee County east of Port Manatee. The study may call for costly new roads and utilities that will pave the way for investors to open shop. Commissioners will have to ask what level of investment they are willing to make in order to attract businesses and to create new job opportunities in that area.

Fast-growing Parrish boasts more new homes built over the past five years than almost anywhere else in the County. The County has attempt to keep pace with the growth by providing traffic improvements, but Commissioners must decide what role a county government should have in helping a new region like Parrish develop a sense of place or somewhere to see friends.