



MELISSA REICHERT
City Manager

✦ THIS WEEK IN FOCUS: INSIGHTS, TRENDS & UPDATES

Strategic planning is one of the most important responsibilities of a city government. It is how we turn the community's vision into tangible action, how we set priorities, and how we ensure accountability. Punta Gorda's current strategic plan reflects months of input from residents, City Council, and staff. It is built around three pillars of sustainability: infrastructure, financial responsibility, and quality of place. Together, these priorities guide us in making decisions that not only address today's needs but also prepare our city for the future.

Maintaining and strengthening our infrastructure is at the heart of the plan. Punta Gorda's waterfront character, aging systems, and vulnerability to storms require thoughtful investment. That is why we are committed to projects such as expanding our Reverse Osmosis Water Treatment Plant and modernizing water meters, ensuring that every household has reliable access to safe drinking water. Improvements to roads, stormwater systems, and parks also play a key role. By prioritizing these investments, we are not only protecting property and public safety but also creating a high quality of place.

Equally important is ensuring that we manage taxpayer dollars responsibly. The strategic plan emphasizes maintaining reserves at or above national standards, reducing debt where possible, and pursuing outside funding for important infrastructure projects. These actions help balance our budget while allowing us to meet growing service demands. Fiscal sustainability is about making sure the City can keep its commitments, both now and into the future.

The plan also underscores the importance of investing in people—both the City's workforce and the broader community. City employees are on the front lines of service delivery, and the plan supports professional development, succession planning, and modern technology to strengthen their ability to serve. Externally, the plan focuses on partnerships with civic groups, nonprofits, and businesses to leverage resources and expand opportunities. This dual commitment ensures that Punta Gorda not only maintains strong services today but also builds the leadership and collaboration needed to meet tomorrow's challenges.

Punta Gorda is more than its infrastructure and finances—it is also the community spirit, the sense of place, and the quality of life that make residents proud to call this city home. The plan calls for strengthening partnerships with local organizations, supporting cultural events, and encouraging strategic development that complements our historic character. City staff are already putting this into action by organizing community festivals, expanding recreational opportunities, and improving accessibility across public facilities. Our upcoming renovations to Historic City Hall and Council Chambers are also an example of honoring our past while preparing for the future. Transparency and resident involvement are woven throughout the plan. Public workshops, surveys, and tools such as interactive dashboards ensure that the community can see progress and hold us accountable.

Residents will continue to have opportunities to provide input as projects move forward, and staff will provide regular updates to City Council and the public.

No plan is ever truly finished. As conditions change, so too must our strategies. But the guiding principles remain the same: build infrastructure that lasts, manage finances wisely, and foster a community where people want to live, work, and invest. Punta Gorda has faced its share of challenges, from hurricanes to economic shifts, yet we continue to adapt and thrive. With this strategic plan, we are charting a clear course for a resilient and vibrant future. *For additional information, please contact City Manager Melissa Reichert at citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com or by calling (941) 575-3302*



DISTRICT ONE DISTRICTWIDE ROADWATCH REPORT #37 FOR WEEK September 7 - September 13, 2025 District One is twelve counties: Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Manatee, Okeechobee, Polk, and Sarasota Click on the link below for updates from FDOT road watch. [fdot-district-one-roadwatch.pdf](https://www.fdot.com/district-one-roadwatch.pdf)



The City of Punta Gorda has implemented **Alert Punta Gorda**, an emergency public notification system. This system allows the City of Punta Gorda to contact the entire community or to target specific areas in case of an emergency or for urgent situations that require the public's immediate attention such as natural disasters (hurricane

warnings or fires), man-made disasters (chemical spills or gas leaks), search and rescue situations (missing children or endangered adults), sexual offender alerts, etc. Users can choose how they want to receive time-sensitive alerts. You can choose to receive alerts on your home or business phone, mobile phone, email, text message, or more based on your settings. Need to sign up for a new Alert Punta Gorda account and choose your alert settings? **Sign Up for Alert Punta Gorda**. Already have an account and need to make changes or update your information? Log In to Alert Punta Gorda <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/services/public-safety/alert-punta-gorda>



SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL FALL PREVENTION MONTH
September 22-26 is National Fall Prevention Awareness Week

Falls in the workplace and falls at home are major causes of injury and death. They can happen to anyone of any age. Thousands of people die every year. Every 11 seconds, an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall related injury. Many people think, "It won't happen to me." But the truth is that more than one in four older adults falls every year in the U.S.

Many falls are preventable. There are plenty of resources available to help plan, prepare, or prevent falls. Here are some steps to help take care of ourselves and our loved ones.

- Find a good exercise and balance program
- Consistently review your home for tripping hazards Work with family members or others sharing your living space to keep hazards put away
- Talk to and work with your doctors about general health, vision, hearing, & prescriptions
- Be Safety Aware and if you see something, say something

Visit

Charlotte Harbor Event Center, 75 Taylor St., for events visit <https://www.charlotteharborecc.com/events>

Fishermen's Village for events visit <https://www.fishville.com/events/>

Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce for events visit <https://puntagordachamber.com/calendar-events/>

Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce for events visit <https://business.charlottecountychamber.org/events/calendar>

Military Heritage Museum for events visit [Upcoming Events – Military Heritage Museum](#)

Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association, 2001 Shreve Street; for events visit <https://pgica.org/>

The Visual Arts Center for events visit [Welcome to the Visual Arts Center of Punta Gorda, FL \(visualartcenter.org\)](#)

The Blanchard House for upcoming events visit www.theblanchardhouse.org

9/11 Remembrance

This week, we paused to remember the events of September 11, 2001 — a day that changed our nation forever.

We honor the nearly 3,000 lives lost in New York City, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania, and we recognize the courage of the first responders, the resilience of the survivors, and the unity that followed in the face of unimaginable tragedy.

Though many years have passed, the memory remains — not only of the lives lost, but of the strength, compassion, and solidarity that emerged in the aftermath.

Let us take a moment to reflect, to remember, and to recommit ourselves to kindness, community, and peace.

We will never forget.



SAVE THE DATES - EVENTS YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS!

September

September 20
12 pm - 4 pm

September 24
5:01 pm
City County & Budget
Hearing
Laisley Community
Room

Sept. 20th!

12pm - 4pm

BLANCHARD HOUSE MUSEUM
CELEBRATE A CENTURY OF HISTORY WITH US
Join Us for Our Reopening Celebration

Blanchard House is 100 years old!!
1924-2024
Blanchard House Museum is 21 years old!!
2004-2025
Founder George Blanchard's Birthday!!
September 22

Refreshments, Conversation, Community!
Sit on the porch or bring a chair to relax under the shade trees!
Saturday, September 20th, 2025 12pm to 4pm
406 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Punta Gorda, FL
www.theblanchardhouse.org

October

September 20 and 21st
10 am - 5 pm
Punta Gorda Chamber of
Commerce
Annual Sullivan
Street Arts & Craft
Festivals

October 6
9 am
City County Pre-
Agenda
Laisley
Community Room

September 13
8 am - 1 pm
Farmers Market Downtown
Punta Gorda
Every Saturday

**SPONSORED BY THE CELTIC RAY
AND THE PGI CAR CLUB
PARK IN THE EMPTY LOT ACROSS
NESBIT FROM THE RAY**

CELTIC RAY CAR SHOW
2ND THURSDAY EVERY MONTH-2-
5PM ALL MAKES AND MODELS

September 13
8 am - 12 pm
Every Saturday

THE CELTIC RAY MARKET
EVERY SATURDAY!
8AM-12PM [ISH]

The Market will be set up across the street from the public market. Street parking will still be available. Please support our supporting staff by cash and any.

THE OUTSIDE BAR AT PUB WILL BE OPEN AT 9AM FOR

- BACON, EGG & CHEESE PASTY-
- SAUSAGE, EGG & CHEESE PASTY-
- EGG & CHEESE PASTY-
- SAUSAGE GRAMY PASTY-
- BREAKFAST CHIPS & SAUSAGE GRAMY-
- MIMOSAS - BLOODY MARYS - IRISH COFFEE - IRISH COFFEE.

CELTICRAY.NET

September 22
9 am
Pre-Agenda Council
Meeting
Laisley
Community Room

October 8
9 am
Council Meeting
Laisley Community Room

September 20
12 pm - 9 pm
Key Lime & Tropical Fest
Fishermen's Village
Punta Gorda, FL

September 23
5:00 pm
City Council
Workshop/Building
Permitting
Laisley Community
Room

October 25
1 pm - 4 pm
Neighborhood Fall
Festival
Shreve Street

SAVE THE DATE

SECOND ANNUAL

NEIGHBORHOOD FALL FESTIVAL

**FREE TO
ATTEND**

**TRICK OR
TREATING**

**FAMILY
GAMES**

**COSTUME
CONTEST**

OCTOBER 25, 2025

1:00P.M. - 4:00P.M.

**PUNTA GORDA
CHARLOTTE LIBRARY
401 SHREVE STREET**

**JOIN US AS COMMUNITY
CONNECTIONS COME TO LIFE!
PRESENTED BY:**



Punta Gorda



**CHARLOTTE COUNTY
Libraries & History**





NEIGHBORHOOD FALL FESTIVAL

SAT, OCT 25, 2025 PUNTA GORDA CHARLOTTE LIBRARY 1:00 - 4:00 PM

COUNTDOWN TO FALL FEST ~ 44 DAYS TO GO!

👻 No reason to fear, our first Fright & Delight sponsor is here! 👻

THE FIRM

ADVERTISING AGENCY

⚡ Charged with gratitude for our Punta Gorda Powerhouse sponsors! ⚡



**Interested in sponsoring the fun? Have a nonprofit for trick or treating?
Want to know how you can help?**

For more information contact:

Ph: 941-575-3309

FallFest@cityofpuntagordafl.com

**WELCOME OUR NEWEST
TRICK OR TREAT PARTNERS!**



**PUNTA GORDA
MASONIC LODGE 115**



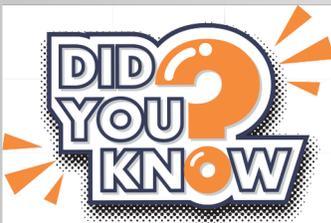
**PEACE RIVER
WILDLIFE CENTER**



**Follow us on Facebook & the City website for updates!
Facebook - City of Punta Gorda Fall Fest - City of Punta Gorda**



Billing and Collections



RETURNED PAYMENTS

Returned items refer to payments that could not be processed against the payment originator's account. These may be returned for various reasons, such as insufficient or unavailable funds, stop payments, closed accounts, post-dated payments, questionable or missing signatures, account cannot be located, counterfeit or fraudulent activity, and others. If a payment is unable to be processed and is returned, Billing and Collections will adjust the account accordingly by reversing the posted payment. Additionally, a returned item fee will be assessed to the account, and a notification letter will be sent to the customer. **Under Florida law, you have 15 days from the date of the notification letter to pay the full amount due, including the service charge, which is as follows:**

- \$25 if the face value does not exceed \$50
- \$30 if the face value exceeds \$50 but does not exceed \$300
- \$40 if the face value exceeds \$300, or up to 5% of the face amount of the check, whichever is greater

Please note that this fee cannot be waived. The fee schedule is governed by Florida Statute 832.07 and is *not determined* by the City of Punta Gorda.

If you are enrolled in auto-pay and need to update your bank account information or request the cancellation of a pending payment *before the scheduled draft date*, please provide written notice immediately via one of the following methods:

- **Email:** pgcollections@cityofpuntagordafl.com
- **Mail:** 126 Harvey Street, Punta Gorda, FL 33950
- **In person:** at the Billing and Collections office located at 126 Harvey Street, Punta Gorda, FL

Notice: Temporary Issue with Online Portal Access Continues

We continue to experience a technical issue where verification emails are not being received by users trying to access many of our online portals. As a result, customers may be unable to log in and use our online services at this time. This issue is affecting business tax receipts, code compliance, building and utility billing. We are actively working with our vendor to resolve the problem as quickly as possible, and we appreciate your patience.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

City Clerk

Signature Update – Did you know your signature can change significantly over the years? Stop by the Supervisor of Elections’ Office (226 Taylor Street, Unit 120, Punta Gorda, FL 33950) to update your signature.

Vote-by-mail Ballots – Vote-by-mail (VBM) ballots will begin being mailed at the end of this month. In order to receive a VBM ballot, you must have placed a new request with the Charlotte County Supervisor of Elections Office [(941)833-5400; 226 Taylor Street] on or after January 1, 2025. The last day to request a VBM ballot is October 23, 2025.

Current Board and Committee Vacancies – If you are interested in serving on a board or committee, please visit our online portal to complete an online application. Unless otherwise noted, all boards meet in Council Chambers, which is currently located at the Lashley Community Room, 120 Lashley Court.

New Businesses – Are you thinking of opening a business in the City? You can learn more about filing for a City business tax receipt on our website. Still have questions? Contact the City Clerk’s Office via email businesstax@cityofpuntagordafl.com or call us at (941)575-3369.

Utilities

Administration & Watering Reminders



Got a leak? If you spot water or sewer issues after hours, give us a call at (941) 575-5070 or reach the Water Plant at (941) 639-2057.

Watering schedules:

We all want green lawns, but Florida law says no watering between 10 am and 4 pm. To keep it fair, here’s when you can water based on your house number.

Ends in 0 or 1	Mon & Thurs
Ends in 2 or 3	Tues & Fri
Ends in 4 or 5	Wed & Sat
Ends in 6 or 7	Thurs & Sun
Ends in 8 or 9	Fri & Tues

You can only water early mornings (12:01 a.m. to 9:59 a.m.) or evenings (4:01 pm to 11:59 pm).



New lawns: Feel free to water daily for the first 30 days.

Car washing and pressure washing: Go for it, just remember to use water smartly. A nozzle with a shut-off works best.

Meter Updates



We're in the middle of moving away from our old AMI (automatic meter) system. For now, all meters are being read manually by our contractor, Olameter. Meanwhile, our in-house tech team is testing a new maintenance app to track meter repairs and keep things running smoothly.

Water Plant Snapshot

This past week our water plant delivered just over 44 million gallons of drinking water to homes and businesses across the city. That averages out to about 6.3 million gallons each day, which is enough to fill nearly 10 Olympic-sized swimming pools daily.

Even though September usually brings a good amount of rain, this year has been on the dry side. We've seen just 2.64 inches so far compared to more than six inches last September. The Shell Creek Reservoir, which is our main water supply, is holding steady at 5.78 feet. That's almost exactly the long-term average and well above the record low, so we're in good shape.

Water Quality

Hardness is one of the big questions we get about our water. Hardness comes from natural minerals like calcium and magnesium. Right now, the water is at 116 parts per million, which equals about seven grains per gallon. That puts us firmly in the "hard water" category. If you use a water softener at home, you'll want to set it to seven grains. Hard water is completely safe to drink, but you might notice it leaves some mineral spots on glasses or buildup on faucets.

We also track total dissolved solids, or TDS, which measures all the tiny minerals and salts in the water. This week's TDS measured 350 parts per million. The long-term average for this time of year is 276, so the water has a little more mineral content than usual, but it is still well within normal and safe ranges.

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Wastewater Treatment

At the wastewater treatment plant, more than 21 million gallons of used water were carefully cleaned this past week. That works out to just over 3.1 million gallons each day. Crews also kept up with mowing and trimming around the plant to keep the grounds in good condition.

Water Distribution

Our distribution crews were busy this week keeping the system running smoothly. They flushed seven hydrants to keep the water fresh, exercised 11 valves, and installed two new meter sets to support new construction. Crews also handled 18 service requests, which included repairing leaks, addressing low water pressure, and fixing four water main breaks. One cleanup project was completed as well, with holes filled and sod laid.

Human Resources



The City of Punta Gorda offers a very generous benefit package to include medical, dental, vision, life insurance, and an employee pension plan. If you are interested in a position listed below, submit an application on the Employment Opportunities | City of Punta Gorda, FL (punta-gorda.fl.us)

- Canal Maintenance Worker I, Canal Maintenance
- Controller, Finance
- Public Works Project Engineer, Engineering
- Maintenance Worker I, Right of Way
- Sanitation Worker II, Sanitation
- Utility Engineer, Utilities

Upcoming Employment Testing

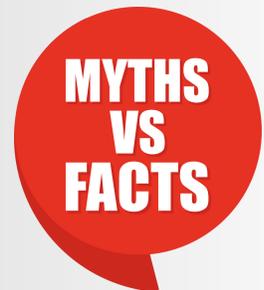
Internship Program — The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Spring 2026 semester. Our program is open to college students and high school seniors interested in gaining educational experience in law enforcement, criminal justice, and small government administration. Spots fill up quickly, and the selection process can be competitive; therefore, we encourage potential interns to apply as soon as possible.

To apply for employment or for more information, please visit www.pgpdjobs.com or contact our Employee Development Coordinator at (941) 575-5571 or by email at employeedevelopment@pgorda.us.

Urban Design

Zoning Myths & Facts Series

Zoning rules shape how neighborhoods look, how properties can be used, and even how your daily life in Punta Gorda unfolds — but misconceptions are common. Some people think zoning is just red tape, while others assume they can build whatever they want.



This series will bust the most common myths about zoning, explain the real rules, and show how these regulations help protect our neighborhoods, preserve our city's character, and keep Punta Gorda a great place to live. Each week, we'll tackle a new myth and share practical tips.



Lot Mowing Program — The lot mowing is currently under way and is scheduled to be completed September 10.

Code Compliance Reminder - Vacation Rentals & Local Business Tax

Operating a vacation rental in the City of Punta Gorda? Property owners are reminded that all short-term rental properties must obtain a Local Business Tax Receipt before renting. This requirement helps ensure compliance with local regulations and supports the continued safety and accountability of vacation rental operations within the city.

If you are renting your property—even occasionally—be sure to complete the necessary steps with the appropriate departments before listing or leasing. Compliance helps protect both guests and neighborhoods.

For more information, please contact the City's Code Compliance Division.



September Planting Guide

September marks the beginning of the fall growing season in Southwest Florida. With slightly cooler mornings and shorter days ahead, this is a great time to refresh your garden and get ready for some of the best planting months of the year.

- **Vegetables:** September is prime time to start cool-season crops while still enjoying some warm-season favorites.
- **Leafy greens:** Lettuce, spinach, and arugula thrive as the weather begins to ease off the summer heat. Sow seeds directly in well-drained soil and keep them consistently moist for tender leaves.
- **Brassicas:** Broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage can be started from transplants or seeds. Plant in full sun and use rich soil with compost to boost growth.

Root crops: Carrots, beets, and radishes can go in now. These do best in loose soil without too many rocks to allow roots to grow straight.

Flowers

- **Sun-loving annuals:** Petunias and salvia can brighten up beds and containers. Both love full sun and regular watering.
- **Butterfly favorites:** Pentas and milkweed are excellent for attracting pollinators while adding color.

Garden Prep for Fall:

September is also the time to amend your soil with compost or organic fertilizer to support new plantings. Mulching around beds helps retain moisture and keeps roots cool as temperatures fluctuate. Keep an eye on rainfall—while storms may bring extra water, good drainage is essential to prevent root rot.

Stay tuned each month for more planting tips to keep your garden thriving through every season!



Public Works

Administrative Office – As a reminder:

Residents may report a problem using any of the following methods:

- Online: Report a Problem | City of Punta Gorda, FL; Email: pubworks@pgorda.us; Phone: 941-575-5050

All report contacts are responded to the same day.

Canal Maintenance — Canal Maintenance Crews manufactured 36 seawall panels, filled 11 depressions at residences. The contractor is currently trimming the mangroves at the Ponce Inlet.

Hurricane Ian Seawall Replacement Projects

City has resumed duties for construction engineering inspections until the end of the project. Review took place of all worksites and updated from 7/30/2025 totals: BSI – 30 Worksites completed. PGI currently has 17 open construction sites, 11 staging lots open, and a total of 234 completed worksites overall. City Seawall Program: PGI has two worksites completed, and the next one at Osprey should start within the next couple of weeks. [Hurricane Ian Related Seawall Failures | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](https://www.punta-gorda.fl.us)

Dock Match Program — The Punta Gorda and Charlotte Harbor Boaters Alliance has launched a program that helps connect boat owners in need of temporary docking with others who have available dock space. To learn more or participate, visit the Punta Gorda Boaters Alliance website at boat2puntagorda.org and click on the Dock Match button.

Dockside Dredging — Property owners included on the Hurricane Ian Seawall Damage list are not permitted to conduct dockside dredging next to the damaged seawall until repairs are completed. Dredging in these areas could lead to further structural damage.

Establishing sod after seawall replacement

Laying sod marks the final phase of seawall replacement construction. According to the City ordinance, property owners are responsible for maintaining and establishing the sod once it has been installed. The City will not reimburse water costs incurred during this process.

City Seawall Maintenance Program - Seawall yearly inspections are currently in progress in the NW2 section. The city seawall program has one work site completed, one active site with backfill being performed.

Vessel Speeds — Canal Maintenance is asking people to be mindful of the current situation in the canals with damaged seawalls. The city code states that vessels in the canals shall be slow at speed with minimum wake in the waterways within the city limits. The speed and operation in the Ponce Inlet, Pompano Inlet, Bass, and Snook Inlets are Idle Speed and No Wake. Wakes from watercraft can cause additional erosion and damage to seawalls already compromised.

Seawall Canal Assessment — The City Seawall Program has awarded a construction extension contract for Marine Construction Group. Work will begin in May.

Stabilizing Erosion — This is a friendly reminder for property owners to routinely inspect the condition of any tarps or plastic covering eroded areas. Over time, exposure to sunlight can cause these materials to become brittle and break down. Using plastic during rain events can help protect the soil and minimize further erosion.

Engineering

City Hall Roof: The roof materials have been delivered to the City Hall, and the contractor will be on-site next week to begin removing the old roof and replacing it with a new one. Please be aware of the equipment and personnel that will be present working in the area, and pay attention to certain areas that will be closed off during the operation.

Tiger Dams: Public Works employees have begun to install the Earth anchors for the Tiger Dams down at the Herald Court parking garage. The team has been removing the brick where the anchor location is to drill a 30-inch anchor into the ground. Once the anchor is installed the crew replaces the brick over the anchor and marks the location for any future tidal surge. The crew has installed a total of 135 anchors. Engineering has laid out the locations for the anchors at City Hall Annex and City Hall.

Facilities/Parks and Grounds

- Crews continue to install the anchors for the tiger dams at Herald Court
- Crews completed repairing the dumpster enclosure at the Herald Court Parking garage

Right of Way

- Crews replaced a storm drain on Jamaica Way
- Mowing along Acline Road and the Water Tower has been completed
- The Crews cleaned out the retention area between Olympia Ave, Nesbit St, and Marion Avenue

Sanitation

- **Dumpster Enclosures** – The dumpster enclosure must be free of storage at all times. Sanitation crew members need to be able to walk around and to the back of the dumpster to latch on the garbage truck's cable for emptying.



The gates to the enclosure must be in working order and closed at all times. Please follow the guidelines listed below to ensure proper service.

- Do not block the dumpster or dumpster enclosure with vehicles or trash.
- Maintain a five-foot clearance all the way around the dumpster free of trash and debris at all times. Staff must be able to walk around and to the back of the dumpster to latch the cable for emptying.
- All trash must be placed properly inside trash bags and the trash bags placed inside the dumpster.
- Do not place loose trash or trash bags on the dumpster enclosure floor. The property owner is responsible for keeping the area clean. City staff is responsible for emptying the dumpster only. Staff is NOT responsible for picking up trash from the ground.
- Construction debris and hazardous waste are strictly prohibited from being placed inside the dumpster. The property owner will be responsible for any fines or fees incurred if the prohibited items are found hidden inside the dumpster.

Dumpster Replacements - Within the City limits of Punta Gorda, the customers own their dumpsters and are responsible for maintaining and replacing them. Dumpsters shall be free of defects liable to hamper or injure a person and must promptly be replaced upon notice. The dumpster must be free of holes, rusted bottoms/sides, and inoperable wheels. The City refuses truck service rear rear-load dumpsters only, and the dumpster must fit properly inside the enclosure. The dumpster lids and enclosure doors should remain closed at all times. Failure to replace a damaged dumpster could result in an interruption of service. Please contact Sanitation prior to ordering a new dumpster to verify size. Sanitation | City of Punta Gorda, FL (punta-gorda.fl.us) or (941)575-5009.



Police Department

Special Operations Unit – The Special Operations unit is now active. Led by Lt. Shane Chodakowsky, the team includes a Marine corporal, a Marine officer, two K9 officers, two community engagement officers, and a traffic officer. The additional Marine officer will enhance police presence on our local waterways, assist boaters, and promote boater safety. The K9 officers and their partners will be available for tracking and narcotics detection, supporting both special operations and general patrols. The two community engagement officers will actively work to address quality-of-life issues in the city. Lastly, one of the most requested new roles is that of a traffic officer, who will focus on “hot spots,” where crashes, complaints, or frequent violations occur.

9/11 Memorial Ceremony

On Thursday morning, members of the Punta Gorda Police and Fire Departments joined their Charlotte County colleagues to honor those who died and the sacrifices made on September 11, 2001. AdventHealth Hospital in Port Charlotte hosted the ceremony, which, in years past, was held in Punta Gorda at the now-closed Shorepoint Hospital.



Animal Welfare League Photoshoot - On Tuesday, the Police and Fire Departments welcomed a visit from the Animal Welfare League of Charlotte County. They brought along some furry friends to be paired with police officers and firefighters for an upcoming calendar. The staff thoroughly enjoyed interacting with the dogs and cats, and we look forward to helping promote the Animal Welfare League's mission of finding forever homes for all their animals.

Introducing PowerEngage - The Punta Gorda Police Department is excited to announce a new tool called PowerEngage, designed to keep citizens informed and gather feedback on non-emergency calls for service. Soon, we will begin sending text message surveys after certain interactions with our dispatchers and police officers. Each survey will include a few questions about your satisfaction with the service and provide you with the opportunity to offer additional feedback.

Your feedback is important to us, and we want to know how we are doing. We also want to provide our officers with the appropriate feedback to help them better serve our citizens. Not everyone we are in contact with will receive a survey. Residents who do not want to participate can either not respond to the texts or reply 'STOP' to opt out of all future text surveys from the department.

We are hopeful that PowerEngage, our new tool, will significantly enhance the services we provide and the feedback received from the community.



Fire Department



The Punta Gorda Fire Department attended a 9/11 memorial service hosted by Advent Health and the Punta Gorda Fire Department, Chaplain Carlo Gargiulo. Advent Health Port Charlotte invited the community members to join them for a 9/11 remembrance service on Thursday, September 11th, 2025, to honor the lives lost and the heroes who emerged during and after the tragic events of September 11th, 2001. The event brought together hospital staff, community members, local officials, and first responders to reflect on the impact of that day and to pay tribute to the courage and sacrifice shown in its aftermath. Together, they honored the nearly 3,000 lives lost, while also acknowledging the enduring resilience and unity that emerged from the tragedy. On this day we remember the 343 firefighters who gave their lives. They ran toward danger when others fled, showing us the true meaning of courage and sacrifice. We honor their memory, stand with their families, and pledge to never forget their service. May their bravery continue to guide and inspire us all.



Thank you for reading!