

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT OCTOBER 27, 2023

City Manager

- The Historic District in Punta Gorda is excited to announce the return of its annual trick-or-treating event for 2023. This beloved Halloween tradition, orchestrated by the welcoming neighbors of the Historic District, has become a local favorite. While it may not be an officially sanctioned city event, the entire community, including the city and downtown residents, goes above and beyond to create a spooktacular Halloween experience. Residents adorn their yards with fantastic decorations, ensuring a fun-filled evening for kids and their parents.



Hundreds of visitors flock to the charming residential streets of the Historic District to partake in the trick-or-treating festivities. Some simply come downtown to admire the incredibly creative house decorations. Additionally, the city extends an open invitation to the public to join them on Harvey Street, where they can get a firsthand look at the equipment used by city employees to serve Punta Gorda's residents. Of course, there will be plenty of delectable Halloween treats for all to enjoy.

New Life Church at 507 West Marion Avenue hosts a Halloween Food Truck Festival for those seeking culinary delights. The festival promises a diverse array of culinary options, including treats from Mr. Ed's Ice Cream, Top-notch Smokehouse, Quiero Mas Tacos, Ana's Empanadas, Spectacular Sweets, Wally's BBQ, Grace's Taste of Poland, J&K Mobile Cafe, In a Pickle, and Rita's Italian Ice. This family-friendly event will also feature music, free water, and the Literacy Bus, providing entertainment for kids of all ages. Free parking for the Food Truck Festival can be found at the First Baptist Church on Gill Street.

If you're in the mood for something sweet, make your way to Gilchrist Park, named in honor of Governor Albert Gilchrist, a revered figure in the city's history. Governor Gilchrist, who served as a real estate broker, surveyor, and political leader, left an enduring legacy of public service in Punta Gorda. He served on the City Council, in the State Legislature, and even as Governor of Florida from 1909 to 1913. To this day, Governor Gilchrist's philanthropic spirit lives on through a tradition he established in his will: a \$5,000 endowment for providing ice cream to all the children of Punta Gorda on Halloween. This sweet tradition continues, thanks to the support of the local community.

For the safety of all, the Punta Gorda Police and Fire Departments are actively promoting safety measures in the downtown Historic District on Halloween night. Street closures begin at 5 p.m. and include West Retta Esplanade East Bound, West Marion Avenue from 41 South to Shreve Street, and adjacent streets in those neighborhoods. Free parking is available at the Herald Court Parking Garage, though please note that the elevator is currently out of service. The community eagerly anticipates your presence on October 31!

Furthermore, the City of Punta Gorda is thrilled to announce the selection of the top 10 finalists for the Florida League of Cities City Government Week 2023 City of Punta Gorda Photo Contest. With over 100 photos submitted, narrowing it down to these 10 was no easy task. You can participate in selecting the top three winners by visiting the city's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/CityOfPuntaGorda/> and clicking the "like" or "love" button on your favorite photos. The contributors of the top three photos with the most likes or loves by 4 p.m. on October 31 will receive a City of Punta Gorda gift basket. *For any further inquiries, you may reach City Manager Greg Murray at citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com or call the general office line at (941) 575-3302.*

- **Precautionary Boil Water Notice (PBWN)** – The earliest possible that the PBWN for the area outlined in the map at right is Oct. 29. Earlier this week crews replaced a main line valve that was broken and causing low water pressure. This required flushing of the lines to replace the valve and the PBWN.



- **Florida Department of Transportation** – US 41/Tamiami Trail from Payne Street to Rio Villa Drive. Motorists should expect intermittent lane closures during daytime and nighttime/overnight hours while crews resurface the roadway, construct curb, gutter, and sidewalk, lanes widenings, and drainage, signage, Street Light, and signalization improvements. Motorists should expect intermittent southbound and northbound lane closures from Aquí Esta Drive to Payne Street during daytime hours from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and during nighttime/overnight hours from 8 p.m. to 6:30 a.m. Motorists should use caution as crews work on the roadway. The expected project completion is late fall 2023.
- **City Council Meeting** – City Council meets on Nov. 1 at 9 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum. A few of the items of interest include:
 - Legislative Priorities Discussion with City Lobbyist
 - Annual Evaluation City Manager
 - CRA Project Status Report Nov. 2023
 - Consider Vacation Rental by Owner ordinance

Urban Design

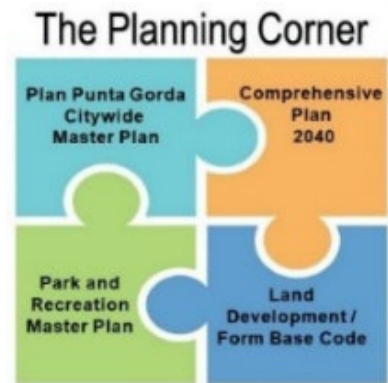
Upcoming Events

- Charlotte Harbor Event Center, 75 Taylor St. For additional information, visit <https://www.charlotteharborecc.com/events>
- Fishermen's Village events can be accessed at <https://www.fishermensvillage.com/events>.
- Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce events can be accessed at <https://puntagordachamber.com/calendar-events/>
- Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce events can be accessed at <https://business.charlottecountychamber.org/events/calendar>

- Military Heritage Museum events can be accessed at <https://militaryheritagemuseum.org/find-upcoming-events>
- Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association, 2001 Shreve Street; for all community events and class information, visit <https://pgica.org/>.
- The Visual Arts Center events can be accessed at [Welcome to the Visual Arts Center of Punta Gorda, FL \(visualartcenter.org\)](https://www.visualartcenter.org/)
- Oct. 28, Rotary Club of Charlotte Harbor Walk-a-Thon, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St, for more information please contact anthonybethelstmark@gmail.com
- Oct. 31, Harvest Party, 507 W Marion Ave, for more information contact becca@newlifeforall.church
- Oct. 31, Downtown Historic District Halloween, for more information visit <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/visitors/events-festivals/trunk-or-treat>.
- Nov. 29, In Stitches @ PGICA will be installing their 10th annual Hector House Holiday Yarn Bomb on Nov. 29 and removing them January 3rd.
- Dec. 1, Light up the Night, community celebration featuring music, children's activities, food and beverages and the Christmas Tree Lighting visit <https://www.lightupthenightpg.com/> for the complete schedule.
- Dec. 1 and Dec. 2, Punta Gorda Garden Club hosts the Holly Day Home Town Tour in the Historic District visit <https://pggc.writing.io/posts/2023-holly-days> to learn more.

Lot Mowing Program

- The City has started a new mowing cycle.
- **Planning Corner** – Staff would like to remind our residents and visitors that the City of Punta Gorda has a ‘Pooper Scooper’ Ordinance (No. 1468-07) that requires any owner or person in control or having custody of any canine to immediately remove the fecal matter of such an animal from:
 - the street, sidewalk, swale, bike path, park area, or any other public property;
 - Any private property in which the owner or person having custody or control of the canine does not have a legal interest.



Enforcement provision shall be through means of citations issued for non-criminal infractions as provided for in the Punta Gorda Code, [Chapter 5, Sec. 7](#) and highlighted below. Any person who violates the provision of this section shall be assessed a civil penalty as follows.

- A fine of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for a first violation;
- A fine of fifty dollars (\$50.00) for a second violation;
- A fine of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for each additional violation.

Leashes are required for dogs per the Punta Gorda Code, [Chapter 16, Sec. 16-4 \(g\)](#). *Leashed* dogs are permitted in Laishley Park, Alice Park, Pittman Park, and Nature Park and on the Punta Gorda Pathways. Dogs *must* be under physical control at all times and shall not interfere with other pedestrians or bicyclists. Dogs are permitted *without* leashes *only* in that area that has been fenced and delineated as the City’s dog park, otherwise known as “Hounds on Henry.”

Public Works

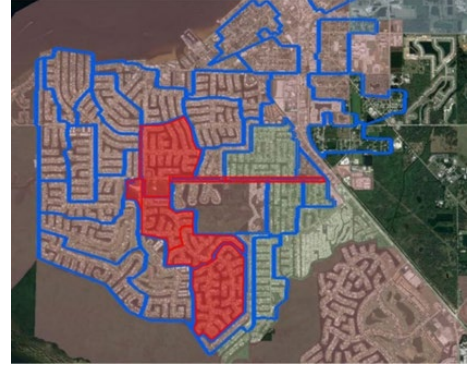
Canal Maintenance

- **Channel Marker Three** – Please be advised that Channel Marker (3) three (located across from the end of Sabal Dr. in the Pompano Cross Channel) has been damaged. The channel marker is lying mostly in the water and may be difficult to see. Crews have attached an orange buoy to locate the channel marker. Boaters are asked to be cautious in these areas until the Channel Marker can be removed and eventually replaced.
- **Canal Maintenance Production** – Canal Maintenance crews manufactured 34 seawalls, repaired two seawall caps, repaired seawalls at five locations and filled depressions.
- **Dockside Dredging** – Property owners that are listed on the Hurricane Ian Seawall Damage list will not be allowed to have dockside dredging performed adjacent to the seawall until the seawall has been repaired. Any dredging along the damaged seawall may cause damage.
- **Stabilizing Erosion** – Just a friendly reminder for property owners to regularly check the condition of their tarps or plastic that is protecting the eroded areas. Tarps and plastic tend to become brittle in the sun and may start falling apart. Our area is still experiencing rain events and plastic will help keep the soil in place preventing further erosion.
- **Canal Maintenance Seawall Failure Update** – Construction schedules have been updated and are posted on the Canal Maintenance website for the next six-month look ahead. There are 20 projects in Punta Gorda Isles under construction with 17 projects completed, and seven projects under construction with three completed in Burnt Store Isles.
- **Establishing sod after seawall replacement** – Placing the sod is the final phase of seawall replacement construction. As per the City ordinance, property owners are responsible for establishing the sod after it has been placed and the City will not reimburse the owners for their water usage.
- **Vessel Speeds** – Canal Maintenance is asking people to be mindful of the current situation in the canals with seawalls being damaged. City code states that the operation of vessels in the canals shall be Slow Speed Minimum Wake in the waterways within the City limits. The speed and operation in the Ponce Inlet, Pompano Inlet, Bass, and Snook Inlet are Idle Speed and No Wake. Wakes from watercraft can cause additional erosion and damage to seawalls already compromised.
- **Dock Match Program** – The Punta Gorda and Charlotte Harbor Boaters Alliance has created a program that connects boat owners who need a temporary relocation of their boats with owners that have available dock space. This information can be found at [Punta Gorda Boaters Alliance \(boat2puntagorda.org\)](http://PuntaGordaBoatersAlliance(boat2puntagorda.org)) click on the Dock Match button for information.

Engineering

- **Swale Regrading** – The swale contractor has completed the swales on North Plum Tree, Scarlet Sage, Panarea Dr., Madrid Blvd, Tripoli, South Crete Ct., Narranja, W. Ann/Lemon St., W. McKenzie/Lemon St., E. Virginia, Rum Cay Ct, La Mancha Ct., Bayshore Ct., Casey Key / Bal Harbor and La Costa Island, Antigua Dr., and Towhee Ct. The contractor will be watering the sod on Casey Key / Bal Harbor, La Costa Island, Antigua Dr. and Towhee Ct. for the next 30 days. They have also excavated approximately 75,000 SF of material and re-sodded all areas with sod. The contractor will start Raven Ct. on Nov 6.

- **Fiber Optic Internet Network** – The fiber optic internet provider HyperFiber has been issued permits for a portion of the construction project to install a citywide fiber optic internet network within the city right of ways. Their construction continues in "bird section" of the City. This citywide project will be under construction during the next six months as they install the network citywide. They are currently working in the areas of the "bird section" and along Aqui Esta Drive, highlighted in red on the map to the right. The blue areas are where installation will be taking place as the project progresses. Initially you will see utility markings within the City right of way, followed by the directional drilling of the fiber optic conduit. Fiber optic boxes will be installed in the right of way or easement at the edge of your property. Once the installation of the underground and service points has been completed for the entire sector, crews will then return to individual locations for the restoration of sod. This will take place at the end of construction in each sector. Please be patient and allow time for the restoration. The City engineering department will be performing spot inspections during construction as well as a final inspection when the restoration is complete to ensure the contractor's restoration meets the City's requirements. HyperFiber has provided a telephone number to call if citizens have questions or concerns about the project and installation. Please contact HyperFiber's Scott Jackson at (239) 887-5379. Please use extra caution while driving through the project area due to construction personnel and equipment.



- **Ponce de Leon** – The contractor has poured concrete for the bump outs for ADA. They are working on the piles under the fishing pier and will be resurfacing them after the inspection is completed. Please take extra caution while driving thru the park due to construction personnel and equipment. Please remember that this boardwalk is closed to the public while it is under construction.



Right of Way

- **Halloween Preparations** – Crews are preparing for the Halloween festivities in the Downtown Historic Area.
- **Bridge Work** – Crews continue to work on the Richard L. Beecher Memorial Bridge.

Sanitation

- **As a friendly reminder, the items listed below are not part of your regular service and may be brought to the Mid-County Mini-Transfer & Recycling Facility** – This is a FREE facility for use by Charlotte County Residents. Proof of residency is required – a valid driver's license, utility, or tax bill will be accepted. It is located at 19765 Kenilworth Blvd in Murdock (Port Charlotte). It is open on Tues thru Sat, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. All unloading must be completed by 4 p.m., with no exceptions. For more information on this facility, or a complete list of items accepted, please call the Charlotte County Solid Waste Services at (941) 764-4360 or visit [Mini-Transfer & Recycling Facilities | Charlotte County, FL \(charlottecountyfl.gov\)](http://charlottecountyfl.gov).

- Clamshell Collection of Loose Yard Waste** – Single-family residential properties must meet the following requirements; The yard waste must be at least one cubic yard (3’x3’x3’) or approximately two 96 gallon trash cans) and must not exceed five cubic yards (5’x5’x5’) for bulk pickup of vegetative yard waste. The pile must be placed on the right-of-way at the edge of the pavement, not the driveway or roadway. Please do not place piles near or under power lines or trees, utility boxes, mailboxes, fire hydrants, etc. This would impede access to the yard waste pile and it will not be collected. Lot clearing, Tree removal and piles that exceed five Cubic yards (5’x5’x5’) are NOT provided by the City. Residents must contract a private hauler or tree company to remove the debris. Residents can request the special pick-up by calling the Public Works Department (941) 575-5050 or completing the online web request <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/public-works/sanitation>. Staff will review the request and the qualifying request will be done in the order of which they are received.



- Construction Debris** – Construction debris and demolition debris will not be collected by the City crew. Disposal of the material should be arranged with your contractor or the homeowner doing the work. Please do not place any construction debris inside the trash or recycling cart.
- Household Hazardous Waste** – Items such as antifreeze, batteries, cleaners/polishers, flares, gasoline/kerosene, pesticides/ herbicides, pool chemicals, mercury, motor oil, used oil filters, paint, stains, and varnishes, are considered Household Hazardous Waste.
- Tree Removal** – Tree removal and lot clearing is NOT a part of your regular service. If you have a whole tree removed you must first contact Urban Design to obtain a permit (941) 575-3372 or [Tree Removal Permit Request | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/public-works/sanitation). The company that removes the tree is responsible for hauling away the remains. The City does not collect whole tree remains or lot clearing remains.
- Whole House Cleanouts** – The City does not collect large bulk quantities of items from whole house cleanouts, garage clean-outs, renovations, remodels, ejections, etc.



Police

- **VIP Program** – The Volunteers In Policing (VIP) program contributed a total of 620 hours of volunteer time to the City of Punta Gorda during the month of September of 2023. Our volunteers are an absolutely vital part of this police department and we appreciate them greatly! Members of the community interested in volunteering are encouraged to contact the Volunteer Staff Coordinator at (941) 575-5536 or by emailing vip@pgorda.us.

Open Positions

- **Police Officer Testing** – We are currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. We will be holding a virtual testing process in Nov. Applications must be received by Nov. 3. The written exam will be completed online anytime between Nov. 10, and Nov. 17 with virtual oral board exams conducted via Zoom on Dec. 4. We are accepting applications from certified and non-certified candidates.
- **Public Safety Dispatcher Testing** – The police department conducts new hire testing continually in order to be prepared for future openings. We are currently accepting applications for the position of Public Safety Dispatcher. We will be holding a testing process in Dec. Applications must be received by Dec. 1. The exam will be held on the morning of Dec. 7, beginning at 9 a.m.
- **Internship Program** – The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Spring Semester of 2024. Our internship 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, so we encourage potential interns to apply today! **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.**

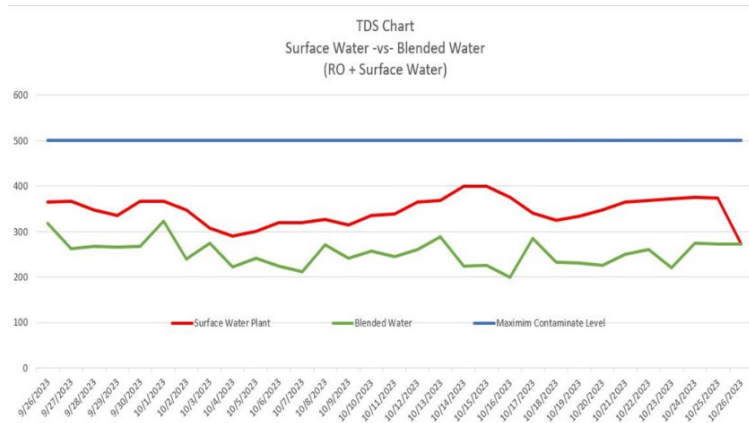
Fire

- **Vehicle Accidents** – The fire department responded to two vehicle related calls this week that were reported only a few minutes apart. The first was a vehicle accident that occurred right in front of the Public Safety Building. This vehicle accident required the aid of Charlotte County’s Haz-Mat unit for a chemical spill within the cargo compartment of one vehicle. The spill was minor and mitigated by the Haz-Mat unit. The second vehicle call came in for a mutual aid response (outside of the city’s response jurisdiction) for a fully involved vehicle fire. PGFD E-3 responded and assisted E-5 with the extinguishment of the fire.



Utilities

- **R.O. Plant**



Administration

- **Leaks** – If you notice a water or sewer leak outside of normal business hours please call the after-hours number (941) 575-5070 or the Water Treatment Plant at (941) 639-2057.

Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 59.4 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 8.5 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving 700 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 1388 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- Rainfall Oct. 2022 0.00” Oct. 2023 1.34”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently” moderately hard” – Grains of Hardness 8 –Total hardness. 128 ppm
- TDS Oct. 26 – Current 237 ppm. Low 196 ppm, High 458 ppm. 13 year average 397 ppm.
- Reservoir Oct. 26 – Current 5.44”, Record Low 5.02', Record High, 6.23' 58 Year Average 5.53'

City Clerk

City of Punta Gorda 2023 General Election

- Per Florida Statute 97.055, the voter registration book will close for the Nov. 7, General Election on Oct. 10. Once the voter registration book closes, the only allowable changes to a registration for the 2023 General Election are to update a voter’s name, address and signature. New voter registrations after book closing will be accepted for subsequent elections. Citizens can check their registration status at the [Charlotte County Supervisor of Elections website](#) and register to vote online through the [Florida Department of State’s website](#).

- 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 on record. In order to be used for verification of a voter certificates, the signature update must be completed before the voter's ballot is received by the supervisor or, in the case of a provisional ballot, before the voter's ballot is cast.
- Vote-by-mail ballots began being mailed to voters with a current vote-by-mail ballot request on Sep. 28. The deadline to submit a request for a vote-by-mail ballot is 5:00 p.m. on Oct. 28. Vote-by-mail requests can be submitted in person at the Supervisor of Elections' Office, by calling the Supervisor of Elections' Office at (941) 833-5400 or by sending a written and signed request to the Charlotte County Supervisor of Elections. Requests for a vote-by-mail ballot must include the voter's name, date of birth, address and Florida driver's license or identification card number or the last four digits of the voter's social security number. Vote-by-mail requests can also be submitted online at the [Charlotte County Supervisor of Election's website](#).
- On-demand ballots became available beginning on Oct. 9, and continuing through Nov. 6. These ballots must be voted and returned immediately after they are received. In order to receive an on-demand ballot, voters must bring valid photo identification and identification including the voter's signature per [Florida Statute 101.043](#). Please see the statute for the full list of acceptable forms of identification.
- Public logic and accuracy testing of all automatic tabulation equipment is done prior to every election in order to ensure the equipment will correctly count the votes cast for all candidates, in all offices, and on all measures.
- The Canvassing Board for the City of Punta Gorda Nov. 7, General Election will meet on Oct. 30, at 9 a.m. at the Supervisor of Elections' Operations Center at 10381 Tamiami Trail, Punta Gorda, FL 33950, to certify the accuracy of the test and witness resetting and sealing of each device that passed to a pre-election state of readiness in a manner to secure its state of readiness until the polls open on Election Day.
- **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 at <https://puntagorda.granicus.com/boards/forms/650/apply/>.
 - **Historic Preservation Advisory Board** (one regular and two alternate) – Meets the fourth Thursday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Seven-member Board with two alternate members. Three-year terms. Maximum of three terms OR partial term plus two more terms. Identifies for the City Council historically significant structures and sites that should be considered for designation as a “Local Historic Landmark” or be nominated for listing on the Florida Master Site File and the National Register of Historic Places. Makes recommendations of the policies for the protection of historically significant structures and sites. Makes recommendations to staff with regard to certificates of appropriateness for any demolition, variance, sign or relocation of structures. Promotes public awareness of historic archaeological preservation and its community benefits.
 - **Planning Commission** (one alternate) – Meets the fourth Monday at 2 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Seven-member Board with two alternate members. City residency required. Three-year terms. Maximum of three terms OR partial term plus two more terms. Identifies for the City Council historically significant structures and sites that should be considered for designation as a “Local Historic

Landmark” or be nominated for listing on the Florida Master Site File and the National Register of Historic Places. Makes recommendations of the policies for the protection of historically significant structures and sites. Makes recommendations to staff with regard to certificates of appropriateness for any demolition, variance, sign or relocation of structures. Promotes public awareness of historic archaeological preservation and its community benefits.

- **Charlotte County Marine Advisory Committee** (1 City representative) – Meets the second Thursday of each month. Twenty-one members. Three-year terms - no maximum. Makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners on marine-related matters.
- **General Employees’ Pension Board** (one resident representative) – Meets quarterly and as called in Council Chambers. Five members – two City residents at-large, two pension plan members and one member appointed by the Board. Four-year terms – no maximum. Financial disclosure required. Charged with management of the General Employees’ Pension Fund.
- **Punta Gorda Isles Canal Advisory Committee** – (three regular) Meets the third Monday at 1:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be a resident of Punta Gorda Isles. Seven-member board. Three year terms – maximum of three terms. Makes recommendations to City Council on effective maintenance of existing canals, waterways, and navigable channels within the district, together with the maintenance and reconstruction of seawalls. Holds public hearings and makes final decision on petitions for special permit to the provisions of Section 6-6(c) of the City Code.

New Businesses

- All persons, firms or corporations engaging in business or occupation within the City of Punta Gorda are required to obtain a Local Business Tax Receipt in accordance with Chapter 12 of the Punta Gorda City Code. As part of our effort to promote economic development and vitality in our area, we offer the following list of new or transferred business within our community this week:
 - Bay Kayaking, 3966 La Costa Island Court
 - Bloom Academy Corporate LLC, 2421 Shreve Street
 - Coleman Crab, 325 East Ann Street