

**MONROE COUNTY**  
**2014/**  
**STATE OF THE COUNTY / 15**



## MESSAGE FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR ROMAN GASTESI



County Administrator

**Roman Gastesi**  
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2014 was a remarkable year for Monroe County. With the steady leadership and consistent vision of the Board of County Commissioners, the County tackled today's tough policy issues and embraced bold initiatives for the future – while balancing goals of lowering costs to taxpayers and ensuring long-term fiscal viability.

Our successful partnership with the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority has led to the on-schedule completion of the Cudjoe wastewater treatment plant, which will start accepting wastewater flow in March 2015. Its collection systems on all islands except Big Pine Key are nearing completion.

We purchased the beautiful bayside 8.2-acre Rowell's property in Key Largo for redevelopment into a community waterfront park. We helped land funding to repair our world famous Old Seven Mile Bridge, saving it for future generations.

Construction is underway for the bayside pedestrian/bike path in Key Largo and the Marathon Airport Customs facility.

During 2014, Growth Management completed a multi-year project to update the Comprehensive Plan, which included new policy direction on managing the amount of growth the county can award over the next 20 years. It also includes goals to model the effects of anticipated sea level rise on county roads, bridges and other infrastructure. This information will help determine road-paving priorities, land use, expenditures and policies that will better prepare the County for the future.

The County began a canal restoration project based on a Canal Management Master Plan that found 311 of the Keys' 502 canals had impaired water quality that rated "poor" to "fair."

The Solid Waste program has undergone an in-depth analysis and will be more financially stable with the completion of a 10-year, \$184 million set of County contracts for the collection, recycling, haul out and management of transfer stations. Recycle carts have been provided to all residents, increasing recycling rates that will help the environment and save the County money.

In 2014, we adopted a thoughtful and careful merit-based pay plan to tie variable raises to performance metrics based on meeting goals tied to the County's Strategic Plan.

Emergency Services received an improved protection classification, which could reduce homeowners' insurance premiums. The Stock Island Fire Station also was completed and the Sugarloaf Fire Station is now staffed with career firefighters.

We drastically lowered financing costs by changing how we were borrowing money for major projects – a change that also allows Project Management to aggressively move forward with construction of new facilities.

As you will see in this report, we have worked hard to make you proud of your government. Our successes of 2014 position us well to do even better this year. Our future is exceedingly bright.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

The 2014 State of Your County report highlights the work and projects that were accomplished by your county government, and explains the progress that is being made with major issues that affect the island chain. It's like the Cliffs Notes version of last year's County government story, with goals included for 2015.

## ABOUT MONROE COUNTY GOVERNMENT

The County Administrator answers directly to the Board of County Commissioners and has the overall responsibility of the daily operations of Monroe County's government, with the exception of constitutional officer functions (Sheriff's Office, Clerk of Courts, Tax Collector, Property Appraiser, Judicial branch and Supervisor of Elections) and the County Attorney and Land Authority, which also answer directly to the BOCC.

The County Administrator oversees the county's divisions: Budget & Finance, Emergency Services, Growth Management, Public Works & Engineering, Sustainability and Employee Services. He also oversees the Medical Examiner.

The Deputy County Administrator serves the County Administrator, and oversees several departments: Budget & Finance (along with the County Administrator), Extension Services, Airports, Library Services, Information Technology, Veterans Affairs and Guardian ad Litem.



*Deputy County  
Administrator*

**Debbie  
Frederick**

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# ABOUT MONROE COUNTY

## MONROE COUNTY STATISTICS

POPULATION:

# 73,090

2010 Census

34,128

38,962

TOURISM:

# 4,400,000

including 3 million  
overnight visitors

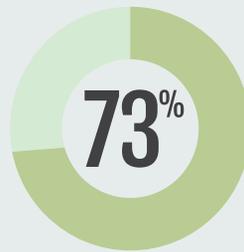
765,000  
by cruise ship

580,000  
day-trippers

AREA:

# 3,738

Square Miles



of the county is water

COUNTY SEAT:

# KEY WEST

DISTRICTING:

# FIVE

Districts

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME:

# \$42,283

MEDIAN AGE:  
**FORTY THREE**

## ABOUT MONROE COUNTY

Spanish Explorer Juan Ponce de Leon discovered the Keys in 1513 during his search for the "Fountain of Youth." During the next three centuries, Spain and Great Britain claimed Florida as a territory.

In 1821, Spain ceded Florida to the United States in accordance with the Adams-Onis Treaty. A year later, a small naval depot was created in Key West to help rid the area of pirates that were terrorizing the sea trade route.

Next, in 1823, the Territorial Legislature established Monroe County as the sixth county in Florida territory. It was named for the fifth President of the United States, James Monroe, who served from 1817 to 1825.

ESTABLISHED  
**1823**

Key West became the County seat in 1828, when the population was less than 600 people and the main industries were salvaging shipwrecks on the coral reef and fishing. In 1845, Florida was granted statehood.

The Keys were perpetually changed with Henry Flagler's decision to build a railroad from Miami to Key West at the turn of the 20th century. His first train rolled into Key West in 1912. The railway was destroyed in the Category 5 Labor Day Hurricane of 1935, but the federal government rebuilt the rail lines as an automobile highway, helping tourism evolve into the major industry it is today.

The County's boundaries originally were the entire southern portion of Florida. Over the years, Dade, Broward, Collier, Lee Henry and parts of Charlotte, Glades and Palm Beach all formed within Monroe County.

Today, Monroe County is the southernmost county in the continental United States and is made up of the entire Florida Keys island chain, its surrounding waters and a virtually uninhabitable region that includes sections of Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve. More than 99 percent of the county's population lives in the Keys, although the islands make up only 13 percent of the county's land mass.

The island chain is a special place, like none other in the United States, with the world's third largest living coral reef off its shoreline. The county is so environmentally diverse and historically important that it's worthy of 17 national and state parks.

# BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



*District 1/Mayor*

**Danny Kolhage**

530 Whitehead Street,  
Key West, FL 33040

**305.292.3440**

boccds1@  
monroecounty-fl.gov



*District 2/Commissioner*

**George Neugent**

25 Ships Way, Big Pine  
Key, FL 33043

**305.872.1678**

boccds2@  
monroecounty-fl.gov



*District 3/Mayor Pro Tem*

**Heather Carruthers**

500 Whitehead Street,  
Key West, FL 33040

**305.292.3430**

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monroecounty-fl.gov



*District 4/Commissioner*

**David Rice**

9400 Overseas Highway,  
#210, Marathon Airport  
Terminal, Marathon,  
FL 33050

**305.289.6000**

boccds4@  
monroecounty-fl.gov



*District 5/Commissioner*

**Sylvia Murphy**

102050 Overseas  
Highway, Suite 234, Key  
Largo, FL 33037

**305.453.8787**

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monroecounty-fl.gov

Monroe County is governed by a five-person Board of County Commissioners, with each member elected at large for staggered terms to represent one of five districts. The County Mayor is elected by majority vote of the Board, serving as its chairperson.

**Mission:** Provide outstanding public service responsive to the needs of our citizens, our unique community and our environment.

**Vision:** Working and learning together to maintain the diverse community by preserving the natural resources and habitat that makes us a unique and preferred place to live and visit.

**Value Statement:** We believe in the highest of ethical behavior as we sail the Seven "Cs": Competence, Creativity, Commitment, Concern, Care, Communication and Continuity.

## BOCC MEETINGS

The Commission meetings are public and held once a month. The dates and agendas are posted on the County's website: [www.monroecounty-fl.gov](http://www.monroecounty-fl.gov). Due to the geographical challenge of our 100-mile plus island chain, the meetings are held on a rotating basis at three sites:

### **Murray Nelson Government & Cultural Center**

102050 Overseas Highway, Key Largo, 305.852.7161

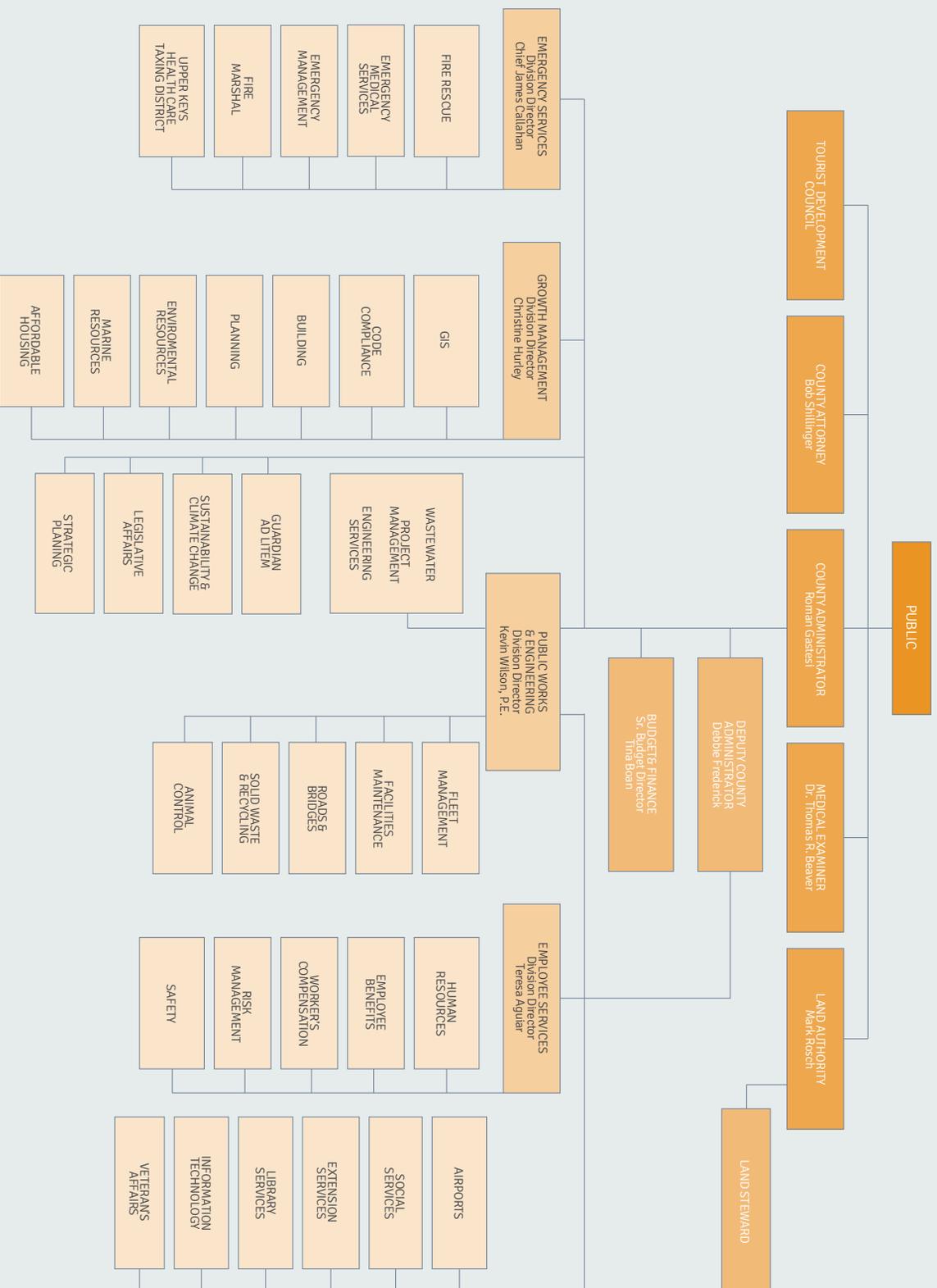
### **Marathon Government Center**

2798 Overseas Highway, Marathon, 305.289.6036

### **Harvey Government Center**

1200 Truman Avenue, Key West, 305.295.4385

# 2015 ADOPTED MONROE COUNTY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

SHERIFF

**Rick Ramsay**

CLERK OF COURTS

**Amy Heavilin**

TAX COLLECTOR

**Danise Henriquez**

PROPERTY APPRAISER

**Scott P. Russell**

SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

**Joyce Griffin**

JUDICIAL

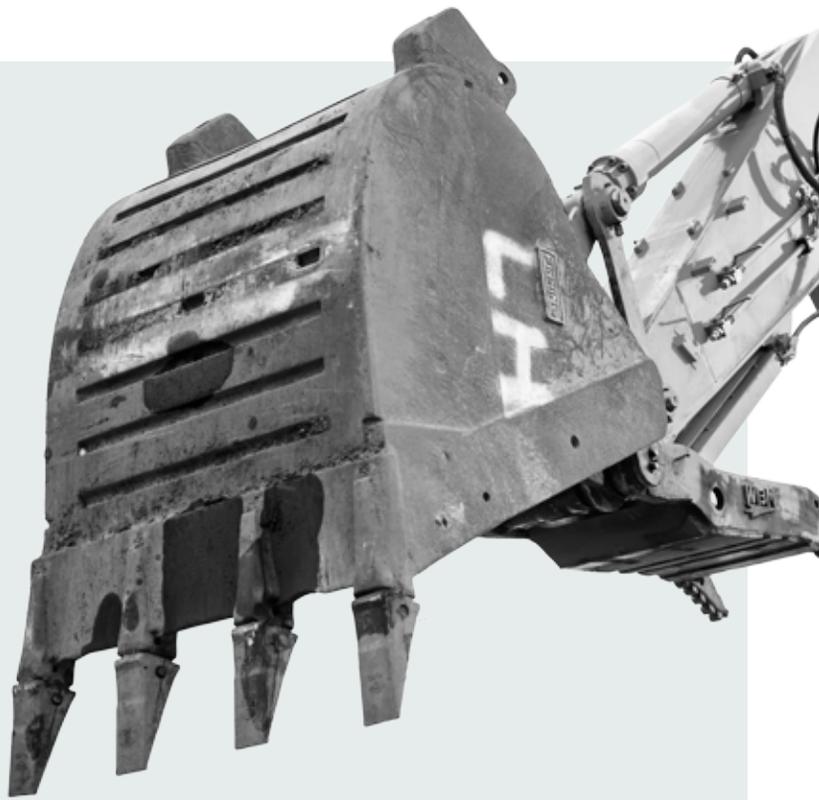
**Chief Judge Mark Jones**



# PUBLIC WORKS & ENGINEERING DIVISION

You think your honey-do list is long. Every day, in the heat and humidity, rain or shine, the men and women of the Public Works and Engineering Division work to keep the county's 80 buildings, 389 miles of roads, 21 parks and beaches, 26 bridges, 7 public boat ramps and 757 vehicles (including the Sheriff Office's fleet) all in tip top shape and looking good.

We manage construction of new and replacement projects — putting to good use the dollars collected over the years from the voter-approved, one-cent sales tax for the Keys' infrastructure fund (see pages 8-9). We manage collection and disposal of your garbage, recycling and yard waste. We also serve as a liaison with the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority during construction of central sewer systems in the county. Work is done through our eight departments: fleet management, facilities maintenance, roads & bridges, solid waste & recycling, wastewater, project management, engineering services and animal control.



*Division Director*

**Kevin G.  
Wilson, P.E.**

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Key West office

**305.453.8797**

Key Largo office

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BUDGET

**\$34,200,000**

Operating

**\$122,400,000**

Capital Spending

**DID YOU KNOW?** The county saves hundreds of thousands of dollars a year by using non-violent inmates from the county jail — who are properly screened and volunteer for the detail — to clean and do maintenance on county vehicles and facilities, pick up roadside trash and perform other needed jobs for Public Works.



# INFRASTRUCTURE ONE-CENT SALES TAX FOR THE KEYS FUND



In 1989, Monroe County citizens passed the first “infrastructure tax,” a one-cent addition to the sales tax – for a period of 15 years. It was originally earmarked to pay for the construction of the Monroe County Detention Center on Stock Island, a much-needed facility to replace the overcrowded jail in Key West. At the time, the county was under federal court order to solve the overcrowding problem.

**In 2000**, citizens voted to extend the penny surtax to 2018, this time it was to pay for the state-mandated central sewer projects, storm water treatment upgrades and land acquisition (primarily of private property whose owners believe environmental regulations have threatened their private property rights).

**In 2012**, the infrastructure surtax was extended again, this time to 2033 with the support of 68 percent of the voters. The purpose of this extension is to fully fund the remaining wastewater projects; repair deteriorating county roads and bridges; continue land acquisition efforts; and fund other county infrastructure projects to improve residents’ quality of life and restore or preserve the county’s natural resources.

**For 2015**, with an economy recovering well from the recession, the surtax is estimated to generate nearly \$32 million. The funds are distributed among the county and municipalities. If the estimate is accurate, approximately \$19 million (60 percent) will go to Monroe County and the remaining 40 percent divided between the municipalities: \$7.8 million to Key West, \$2.7 million to Marathon, \$2 million to Islamorada, \$256,000 to Key Colony Beach and \$58,000 to Layton.

The tax extension mandated that the funds collected starting 2019 be used only for wastewater until such time as the governing body of the county or municipality determines that the necessary wastewater projects are completed or in progress and fully funded. After that mandate is met, use of a jurisdiction’s remaining funds can be used for other referendum-allowed infrastructure projects.

The surtax has generated about \$25 million per year, with more than half paid by tourists. This lowers the property tax burden of our residents.

Since the penny infrastructure surtax was first collected in 1990, it has generated more than \$400 million, with more than \$100 million used to complete several wastewater systems.

The funds also have been used for developing or redeveloping County parks; creating or replacing critical fire stations, jails and courthouses; completing work on environmental quality of life projects; and helping to avoid property tax increases on residents by sharing the burden of maintaining our infrastructure with our visitors through the sales tax.

## HERE'S A LOOK AT SOME OF THE PROJECTS, APPROPRIATED FOR THE PERIOD 2015-2019

### WASTEWATER:

More than \$75 million for the completion of the Cudjoe Regional, Bay Point & Conch Key and Duck Key wastewater systems. Another \$1.2 million is earmarked for connections of county-owned buildings and \$2.6 million for a reverse osmosis system and upgrades for the Ocean Reef wastewater system.



### ENVIRONMENT:

\$5 million for canal restoration pilot projects to improve near-shore water quality.

### ROADS AND BRIDGES:

\$28 million for road paving backlog and \$2.7 million for restoration of historic Old Seven Mile Bridge.



### LAND ACQUISITION:

\$2 million as match funding to pursue purchase of environmentally sensitive land with the state Department of Environmental Protection's Florida Forever program.

### COUNTY GOVERNMENT, JUDICIAL, LAW ENFORCEMENT AND DETENTION BUILDINGS:

About \$9.4 million for repairs, additions and maintenance to county government and judicial buildings throughout the Keys, including Harvey Government Center, Freeman Justice Center, Gato Building, Lester Building, Marathon Courthouse, Marathon Government Center and Emergency Operations Center, Marathon Library, Murray Nelson Government Center, Monroe County Detention Center and Sheriff's Office Headquarters and \$10.6 million for the construction of a new courthouse and jail complex on Plantation Key.

### PUBLIC SAFETY:

\$4.5 million for a new Summerland Key fire station; \$1.97 million for fire rescue/EMS vehicle replacement for County; \$850,00 for new fire trucks and fire hydrants for the Key Largo Volunteer Fire Department; and \$1.9 million for the Fire Academy on Crawl Key.

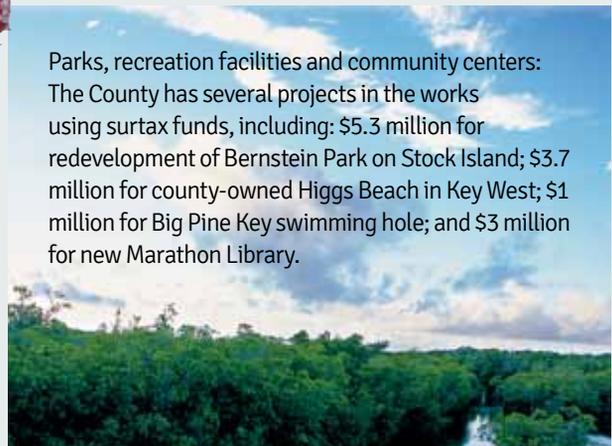


### Parks, recreation facilities and community centers:

The County has several projects in the works using surtax funds, including: \$5.3 million for redevelopment of Bernstein Park on Stock Island; \$3.7 million for county-owned Higgs Beach in Key West; \$1 million for Big Pine Key swimming hole; and \$3 million for new Marathon Library.

### MISCELLANEOUS:

Infrastructure funds also are paying \$2.7 million in engineering costs for a variety of projects during the next five years. The funds also are used for infrastructure-related bond payments, both principal and interest.



# PUBLIC WORKS

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT & ENGINEERING SERVICES



### PROJECT MANAGEMENT 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Completed upgrades to 31 county facilities to provide accessibility from the parking lot to the front door to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. We also designed and constructed ADA-compliant upgrades to the interior of nine county facilities.
- Provided emergency repairs to Bayshore Manor Assisted Living Facility on Stock Island. They included structural beam replacements and electrical upgrades. We also provided emergency repairs to the Marathon Animal Shelter.
- Contracted design services and completed construction of renovations to the West Martello Tower in Key West.
- Completed the new Stock Island Fire Station, the Marathon Courthouse and expansion of the Freeman Justice Center lobby in Key West.

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT 2015 GOALS

- We will be busy with many facility projects, including a new Summerland Fire Station, new Marathon Library, new Marathon Airport Customs facility, new Fire Training Academy building and new Plantation Key Government Center and Courthouse. We also will be working on renovation projects at the Freeman Justice Center (acoustic improvements), Harvey Government Center (Senior Nutrition Center), Key West Light House and the historic jail at Jackson Square in Key West.
- We also are working to improve County parks, including a passive park at the Big Pine Key Swimming hole (with community input), redevelopment of Rowell's Marina and Bernstein Park, and completion of the Higgs Beach fitness trail.

### ENGINEERING SERVICES 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Assisted in obtaining \$1 million grant from Florida Department of Transportation to repair the ramp to historic Pigeon Key in Marathon.
- Formulated a \$35 million, five-year paving plan for County roads, of which \$20 million is earmarked for all the streets that were dug up for construction of the Cudjoe Regional Wastewater System.
- Completed repairs of Watson Boulevard Bridge Project using state fuel tax and federal highway funds.
- Finalized design and initiated construction of U.S. 1 Bayside Shared Use Path in Key Largo, which will include a pedestrian bridge over Adams Cut that is receiving grant funding.
- Coordinated emergency repairs expeditiously for No Name Key Bridge, enabling the annual bridge road race to be held as scheduled.

### ENGINEERING SERVICES 2015 GOALS

We will be busy moving forward many of the aforementioned projects we worked on in 2014. We will finish a five-year bridge repair/maintenance program and incorporate new projects into the County capital project plan and budget. And we will begin design of a replacement structure for the Sugarloaf Boulevard Bridge, in preparation for the start of construction in 2018.

# PUBLIC WORKS

## FLEET MANAGEMENT & FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

### FLEET MANAGEMENT 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The crews at our three County garages completed a combined 2,850 work orders and performed 1,300 vehicle and equipment inspections. Preventive maintenance also was done.
- Garage personnel purchased, distributed and billed for 162,000 gallons of gas and diesel fuel and replaced 26 outdated county vehicles.
- Using funds from a state grant, we installed a new emergency power generator for the Murray Nelson Government building in Key Largo to enable the facility to be used during major storms as a special needs shelter.
- Replaced fuel island pumps at Key West and Marathon fuel facilities, and completed replacement of gasoline and diesel fuel pump spill containment that's mandated by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.
- Sold used motor oil, earning the County thousands of dollars annually. We also save the County money by repairing the County's automated fuel facilities in-house instead of contracting the work.
- Completed major repairs to Sugarloaf Fire Department emergency power generator and replaced 63rd Street generator diesel fuel tank and spill containment.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Monroe County has 757 vehicles (including the Sheriff Office's fleet).



### FLEET MANAGEMENT 2015 GOALS

- Provide vehicle-use reports, with a goal to reduce the fleet size, and implement motor pools in which departments can share vehicles to save tens of thousands of dollars. Implement new procedures to more efficiently sell surplus vehicles and equipment, using websites that should result in quicker sales and less vehicle depreciation.
- We also plan to improve Public Works knowledge about storm water pollution prevention, adding above ground vehicle wash racks at all garage facilities for containing contaminated water from entering storm drains and ground water.

### FACILITIES MAINTENANCE 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Replaced air conditioning systems at Bayshore Manor Assisted Living Facility, East Martello Towers, Marathon Government Annex and Summerland Tower site. We also installed a new chiller at Harvey Government Center.
- Treated for subterranean termites at Bayshore Manor and East Martello Towers; installed new lighting protection at Key West Lighthouse; installed waterproofing to roofs of Marathon Health Department, Marathon Library and Ellis Building; and replaced roofs at Islamorada Library and Marathon Jail.
- Replaced a Halon fire suppression system at the Clerk of Court's Key West records facility with a "clean agent" system.
- At the Monroe County Detention Center at Stock Island, we replaced a fire detection and alarm system; assisted the Americans with Disabilities retrofit project with elevator modifications; installed 16 fingerprint readers that replace keys or magnetic cards for access; and completed modification of first appearance room into new secured judge's chambers.
- At the Marathon Government Center, we assisted Emergency Communications with dispatch renovations; replaced a first floor air conditioning compressor; replaced carpet and tiles; and completed sewer connection.
- We prepped and installed video equipment and appliances for Emergency Management and refurbished water pressure pump systems at the Sheriff's Office Administration Building and Juvenile Justice Building.
- And, we painted. A lot.



### FACILITIES MAINTENANCE 2015 GOALS

Upcoming projects include completing municipal sewer connections for Cudjoe Substation, Emergency Medical Services, the Medical Examiner's facility, the Fire Training Academy and the Marathon Jail. And, we will paint some more.

# PUBLIC WORKS

## ROADS & BRIDGES

The Roads and Bridges Department maintains county roads and rights of way, bike paths and county bridges, operating from locations in Key West and Plantation Key.

### 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Working in coordination with several agencies, cleaned up litter at all illegal and dangerous boat and personal watercraft launch areas on Card Sound Road, and installed barricades to prevent future illegal use in the future.
- Created new overflow parking lot for the Vietnam Memorial at Key Largo Park.
- Assisted County land steward in removing 78.59 tons of illegal dumping debris at mile marker 97 and blocked off area for future dumping, which helps improve water quality.
- Mowed 616 miles of road right of way and chipped the vegetation debris of 212 miles; installed 692 new signs; completed 31,216 feet of shoulder work; and installed or refurbished 628 feet of drainage pits and trench drains.
- Repaired bike path at Higgs Beach in Key West
- Saved \$53,000 in dump fees by delivering mulch to residents.

### 2015 GOALS

The department would like to purchase a sweeper truck to maintain the new pedestrian and bike paths in Key Largo; re-stripe traffic lines in all neighborhoods; paint hump bridges on Duck Key; and increase safety training for employees.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Upper Keys Road Department foreman Montillo “Scott” Desquotte saved the life of an infant. While working, he heard screams from hysterical parents who needed help for their baby who had stopped breathing. The 6’5” Desquotte, a member of the Key Largo Volunteer Fire Department, performed CPR and got the tiny baby breathing before paramedics arrived.



Our routine maintenance includes trimming trees, mowing, street sweeping, road striping, signage, shoulder work and pothole repairs. We also remove debris and clean up after natural storms and man-made messes, such as Fantasy Fest.

# PUBLIC WORKS

## SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING

The County's solid waste program covers many services for the County's residents, including garbage, yard waste and recycling pickup, processing and haul out from the County.

In 2014, with the existing contracts about to expire, the County became involved to negotiate new long-term contracts that were more cost effective and more environmentally beneficial.

The results: new 10-year contracts to vendors for collection, recycling and transfer station operations (where waste is delivered, processed and hauled away). The \$184-million in new solid waste contracts will save the county a minimum of \$10 million over the 10 years and included green provisions that will benefit the County for the next decade.

The County is also in the midst of negotiating a long-term contract for a more sustainable method of processing yard waste, which was initiated by a recommendation from the Climate Change Advisory Commission.

After soliciting for the processing of the County's yard waste, the highest rated proposal was found to be "gasification." This is a fully closed-loop system that turns the renewable yard waste into energy, in the form of electricity, without generating damaging emissions. Gasification is twice as efficient at producing energy as the current incineration method. County staff will be presenting a contract to the BOCC in 2015 for the interim and long-term processing of the County's yard waste.

### 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Reduced the County's long-term financial exposure by capping the Consumer Price Index (inflation) increases at 2.5% and waiving these increases in several years of the contract. Previously, increases were not capped and CPI adjustments were made every year.
- Secured and distributed \$1.5 million in recycle carts at no charge to the County, funded by the collection vendors. Since the October 1, 2014 introduction of the carts, recycling tonnage has increased by 20%. We anticipate these bins will further increase the County's current 60% recycling rate. More recycling saves the County money because the cost of processing recyclable materials is less than the cost of processing regular municipal solid waste.
- Obtained an immediate waiver of the \$467,000 capital debt owed to the haulout vendor upon execution of the new contract.
- Replaced the hazardous materials storage sheds at Cudjoe and Long Key transfer stations with new facilities.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Each garbage truck carries enough waste, which when gasified, could generate enough electricity to power two homes for an entire year.



### 2015 GOALS

Execute new yard waste contract and start using the new processing system. Increase recycling rate from 60% to 70%. Replace the dilapidated scale houses at the County's three transfer stations in the lower, middle and upper Keys.

# PUBLIC WORKS

## WASTEWATER

In 1999, the State of Florida mandated that the entire Keys clean up its act and install advanced wastewater treatment systems, which would eliminate the use of septic tanks, illegal cesspits and ineffective small treatment units. It was a daunting task for a small county spread over a series of 40 islands.



In part, due to this unique geography, Monroe County is divided into 12 major service areas for central sewer systems. The County worked with state and federal legislators to acquire grants and funds; pushed for voters to approve a much-needed extension to the one-cent infrastructure sales surtax; and partnered with Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority for the county portions of the system. At the same time the five municipalities, the Key Largo Wastewater Treatment District and the Ocean Reef-based North Key Largo Utility Company installed sewer systems in their areas. Now, the finish line is in sight for the nearly \$1 billion project (which includes the costs of homeowners and business owners to connect).

In 2014, Monroe County made the final payments on the Duck Key and Big Coppitt sewer projects. The Keys have only two systems left to complete: the Village of Islamorada, which is in the hands of the municipality and is scheduled for a December 2015 finish date, and the Cudjoe Regional Wastewater System, the largest and most complex system of the County's wastewater master plan.

Cudjoe Regional runs from Mile Marker 17 on Sugarloaf Key to Mile Marker 33 on Big Pine Key in unincorporated Monroe County. The County's Wastewater department, which oversees the financing of the agreement between the County and the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority, which builds, operates and maintains the system.

In 2014, the treatment plant was constructed and is close to completion and about 70% of the collection system was installed.

The County's 2015 Capital Improvement Plan reflects the Board of County Commissioner's primary objective of completing all the centralized wastewater projects to meet the looming State mandate to complete central sewers in the Keys by Dec. 31, 2015.

The County's 2015 budget includes about \$80 million for the Cudjoe Regional project. This funding is financed by Clean Water State Revolving Fund loans, which will be repaid from property assessments and sales tax revenue.

In 2015, the treatment plant

will begin operations and start accepting flow from the inner islands portion of the project. The last piece of the puzzle, the collection system to Big Pine Key, is scheduled for completion in early 2016.

For 2015, the County will complete all remaining connections on the Stock Island sewer project and connect County-owned facilities to central systems, where available. By 2017, most of the Keys should be hooked up to advanced wastewater treatment centers.

It's been a long and expensive process, but the efforts to convert to central sewers was a necessity for the Keys marine ecosystem that is dependent on clear water with low nutrient levels. Without the new wastewater systems, the water quality of the canals and near-shore waters would have continued to degrade and threaten tourism, the fragile environment and the Keys way of life.

# PUBLIC WORKS

## ANIMAL CONTROL



The mission of Animal Control is to promote responsible pet ownership, animal care and community safety; increase pet adoptions and reduce pet overpopulation by compassionately using education and enforcement.

BUDGET

**\$1,1**  
million

Animal Control is responsible for enforcing State and County animal control regulations, protecting the public from the dangers and nuisances of uncontrolled, dangerous or feral animals, and protecting animals from cruelty, abuse or abandonment.

Animal Control Officers conduct investigations, issue citations and attend court proceedings related to alleged violations. The shelters provide all animals in its custody with proper care, nutrition and shelter. The contractors provide an adoption service for all adoptable animals. They also are responsible for ensuring that animals are properly vaccinated for rabies and that all dogs, cats and ferrets also have up-to-date county license tags and certificates.

The Keys have three animal control shelters – in Key West, Marathon and Key Largo – which are currently managed by three independent contractors. They patrol all of Monroe County, including the incorporated cities, providing animal control services 24/7.

The Key West shelter, managed by the Florida Keys Society for the Prevention of Cruelty, is in the midst of a campaign to raise \$6 million for a much-needed new facility, replacing its old crumbling buildings that were made worse by the saltwater intrusion of Hurricane Wilma in 2005. While the shelter is raising the money, the County entered into a long-term contract with them to enable their fundraising.

The facility, with a planned completion date of 2016, will provide a comfortable home for the animals, a state-of-the-art veterinary clinic, a quarantine area for contagious animals, an air-handling system to prevent the spread of disease and enough room to house pets of first-responder emergency personnel who stay behind to protect our community in the event of a hurricane.



**DID YOU KNOW:**  
During 2014, about 874 animals that were cared for at the three county shelters were adopted.

### ANIMAL SHELTERS

- The Florida Keys Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals  
5230 College Rd., Key West  
305.294.4857; After-hours:  
305.394.7596; [fkspca.org](http://fkspca.org)
- Safe Harbor Animal Rescue of the Florida Keys (SHARK)  
10550 Aviation Blvd., Marathon  
305.743.4800; After-hours:  
305.394.7806
- Humane Animal Care Coalition  
105951 Overseas Hwy., Key Largo  
305.451.0088

# SUSTAINABILITY

## CLIMATE CHANGE & SEA LEVEL RISE

There's a consensus among the world's leading scientists that global climate change is among the most significant problems facing the world today. It's especially true for the low-lying state of Florida, a peninsula surrounded by water. And no place in Florida is more vulnerable than the Keys. We are ground zero for experiencing the impacts of climate change, especially sea level rise.

Many streets already are flooding during times of extreme high tides. Habitat for wildlife that was once high and dry is becoming encroached with seawater. Rising seas also will affect roads, bridges, other County infrastructure – and homes and businesses in the future.

In 2012, the Board of County Commissioners approved a full-time sustainability coordinator. Now, that person works not only on climate change issues, but also heads a comprehensive canal restoration project to improve the county's water quality – and is involved in solid waste and recycling to help the Keys become greener and thus more sustainable.

There are things that can be done now and in the long term to make our island chain more resilient and more sustainable to sea level rise, extreme weather and other climate change impacts. We have created “GreenKeys! A Plan to Create a Sustainable Florida Keys” program. We are seeking adaptation strategies to sea level rise and working to find the best ways to be sustainable.



[www.greenkeys.info](http://www.greenkeys.info) | [www.monroecounty-fl.gov](http://www.monroecounty-fl.gov)



Director

**Rhonda Haag**  
**305.453.8774**

Haag-rhonda@  
monroecounty-fl.gov



BUDGET

**\$350,000**

for sustainability program,  
additional \$5 million for canal  
restoration

### 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Hosted a Board of County Commissioners Sea Level Rise modeling workshop that outlined the anticipated affects from sea level rise to County infrastructure, including roads, bridges and buildings, using the sea level rise projections from the Southeast Florida Climate Change Compact. The results will be summarized in a report to assist the County in planning for future sea level rise.
- Hosted a series of three community sea level rise workshops in Key Largo to develop modeling scenarios to assess the effects of projected sea level rise on homeowners and businesses in Key Largo. The scenarios were evaluated to identify which had a positive cost/benefit ratio.
- Provided a Greenhouse Gas Update to the BOCC, hosted a Sea Level Rise workshop for technical staff and gave a Planning and Legal Issues Sea Level Rise workshop for members of the public and employees.
- Developed a Sustainability Action Plan, which is near completion. It will include a 5-year action plan for implementing projects from the County Climate Action Plan.

### 2015 GOALS

- Host community sea level rise workshops in the Middle and Lower Keys to educate the citizens about the potential effects of sea level rise to their homes and businesses and about the County's plan.
- Finish the Sustainability Action Plan and begin its implementation.

# SUSTAINABILITY

## CANAL RESTORATION

Many canals throughout the island chain do not meet the State's minimum water quality criteria and are a potential source of nutrients and other contaminants to near shore waters.



While the Keys' new wastewater treatment and storm water management systems will greatly help, these will not completely eliminate the impaired water quality conditions.

To address the problem, a much-needed Canal Restoration program began in 2012, when Monroe County was awarded a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to complete a Canal Management Master Plan. After extensive fieldwork, the plan was completed in 2014, prioritizing the water quality for the 502 residential canals in the Keys – including those located within municipalities.

In 2014, the Board of County Commissioners approved moving forward with a \$5 million series of six canal restoration demonstration projects, which include engineering designs, construction and outreach services. The results are to be used in future canal restoration planning, cost estimation and grant applications.

**DID YOU KNOW?** The fieldwork conducted for the Canal Management Master Plan found that of the Keys' 502 residential canals, 311 have impaired water and 131 are rated poor.

### 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Completed the design and permitting for the County's three largest canal restoration demonstration projects: two organic removal projects on Big Pine Key and one backfilling project (to remove large stagnant zones) in Key Largo. In December, issued solicitations for the construction of these projects.
- Completed requirements for a \$100,000 grant from the state Department of Environmental Protection for the design of a canal demonstration project for a culvert installation on Geiger Key – and secured an additional \$100,000 FDEP grant for construction of the project.
- Secured a \$75,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for canal outreach services to be conducted in early 2015.
- Secured a \$300,000 grant from EPA for water quality monitoring of the County's demonstration canals. (These funds go directly to Florida International University, which is conducting the monitoring).
- Submitted applications for the local RESTORE process to seek federal money from the Gulf Coast Restoration fund for additional canal restoration projects. In December 2014, the local selection committee tentatively ranked the County's canal projects as its second and third priorities.
- Created a Canal Restoration website: [www.monroecounty-fl.gov](http://www.monroecounty-fl.gov)

### 2015 GOALS

To begin and complete construction of the County's six demonstration restoration projects.

# SOCIAL SERVICES

For more than 35 years, the Social Services department has opened its doors to the citizens of Monroe County, offering basic and life-sustaining services. We primarily assist disabled individuals, senior citizens, families with young children, the working poor and those individuals who are unable to be assisted with traditional support programs.

In 2014, we had 3,581 office visits and 7,250 incoming calls from people inquiring about our wide variety of programs. Our Monroe County Transit Service provided 22,348 rides covering 116,442 miles. Our four nutrition sites provided 14,035 meals, as well as delivering 821 hot meals and 35,177 frozen meals. And we provided 53 pauper burials and cremations, with a service to honor their lives.

Our wonderful assisted living facility, Bayshore Manor, is home to 16 full-time residents and up to 10 daytime respite clients. Our in-home services for the elderly and disabled provide personal care such as bathing, homemaking, chore services, companionship and meals.

We offer financial assistance to families or individuals who need help paying for prescription medications, medical or dental procedures for those without any other type of insurance or assistance and emergency shelter for individuals or families facing eviction or potential homelessness. We also provide assistance with electricity for low-income homeowners or renters, referrals to emergency services and more.

## 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- In March 2014, we were the first county agency in Florida to complete the terms of our Weatherization Assistance Program grant, weathering four homes for \$26,000. We also entered into a partnership with the City of Key West Housing Authority to operate the Weatherization/State Housing Initiatives Program, which allows for the extensive weatherization of homes that would otherwise not be eligible.
- The Florida Department of Transportation awarded us more than \$65,000 to purchase a para-transit bus to add to our fleet.
- We worked with the Monroe County Homeless Services Continuum of Care for a Homeless Prevention Grant. This grant provides payment for past due rent, mortgages or utility bills, enabling a family with minor children to remain in their home.
- Bayshore Manor, an assisted living facility, underwent a major renovation. The six-month project required residents to be relocated for only two nights.
- We took the lead in partnering with the City of Key West for the area's first joint homelessness task force meeting.

## 2015 GOALS

We will continue to seek out additional sources of revenue, such as new grant opportunities, that will allow us to serve additional citizens and meet more needs throughout the community.



BUDGET  
**\$3,250,000**



Director

**Sheryl Graham**  
**305.292.4510**

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monroecounty-fl.gov



**DID YOU KNOW?** When Bayshore Manor opened in 1948, in its same location on Stock Island, it was called the Bayshore Manor Old Folks Home. Today, it's the only known county-owned and operated assisted living facility still in existence in Florida.

# STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Strategic Plan guides the scope and direction of County services based on priorities established by the Board of County Commissioners – after extensive input from the public.

The plan enables all County divisions and departments to focus their actions, resources and budgets on goals and projects that support the County’s grand vision of its desired future.

Creation of the County’s first Strategic Plan began in 2006 with a series of public workshops. Public input continues to shape the plan as it is updated to respond to changing priorities.

Monroe County has 24 citizen boards and committees that continually inform County staff and Commissioners about their priorities, concerns and recommendations on a wide variety of issues, including wastewater, the environment, public safety, transportation infrastructure and quality of life.

An update to the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan is in the works, which will form the foundation of future County budgets. The Strategic Planning department also manages the Capital Plan for County construction projects and capital financing.

## 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

To attract and retain the best possible employees to help meet Strategic Plan goals, we implemented a merit-based pay plan that ties variable raises to performance. Under this plan, each employee is assigned annual goals that support the County’s strategic plan. This provides them with a clearer understanding of what is expected of their performance and more incentive to meet their individual assigned goals. For example, Fire Rescue had a priority to increase the number of state certified fire fighters, with a manager’s assigned goal to ensure that five firefighters receive the training to earn that certification.

Instead of using the traditional method of government financing with the issuance of municipal bonds, we spent a lot of time researching more cost effective alternatives for borrowing money for capital projects. This paid off: \$32 million was borrowed from banks with shorter term loans, which not only lowered our interest costs but enables Project Management to aggressively move forward to build the Plantation Key Courthouse & Jail, Fire Training Academy, Marathon Library and Summerland Fire Station. This borrowing was also used to refund the County’s Series 2003 Revenue Bonds, saving \$300,000. Finally, the credit put in place gives the County flexibility in making construction plan changes to projects, including the Cudjoe Regional Wastewater system.

## 2015 GOALS

- Develop and publish a comprehensive Capital Plan to meet the Strategic Plan goals. It will include all capital-related projects undertaken by the County that have an estimated cost in excess of \$50,000 – regardless of the funding source.
- The plan will also include all elements required to be reported in the annual Comprehensive Plan Update, including potable water projects by the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority and U.S. 1 improvement projects by the Florida Department of Transportation.
- Coordinate with divisions and departments in the creation of a standardized Annual Departmental Action Plan.



Director

**Kevin Madok**  
**305.292.4480**

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monroecounty-fl.gov



# AIRPORTS

The Airports department provides facilities for commercial service and general aviation at the Key West International Airport and the Florida Keys Marathon Airport. We oversee daily operations, maintenance, security and emergency services support functions.

The Key West airport opened with one terminal in 1957. In 2009, a new 30,000-square foot terminal opened. Today, the airport offers direct commercial air service to major Florida cities and Atlanta, New York, Washington and Charlotte. Last year, about 738,000 passengers flew in and out of the airport on about 14,600 arriving and departing flights.

The Marathon airport serves the aeronautical, business and ground transportation needs of local and transient users who fly, live and play in the Middle Keys. An updated public airport terminal building will have a user-fee U.S. Customs & Border Protection facility in mid-2015.

**738,000** PASSENGERS FLEW IN AND OUT OF THE KEY WEST AIRPORT IN 2014.



Director

**Donald DeGraw**

**305.809.5200**

Degraw-donald@monroecounty-fl.gov

**18** EMPLOYEES

BUDGET  
**\$8,900,000**

## 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- To make up for the departure of Southwest's service in June at Key West International Airport, American, Delta and Silver Airlines helped fill the void with the addition of 233,560 available seats by the end of February. It's about 75 percent of the loss of Southwest's 313,170 available seats.
- The Federal Aviation Administration and Florida Department of Transportation contributed more than \$4 million for projects at Key West International Airport. They include installation of a crushable concrete block safety system on the west end of the runway and an airfield drainage project to alleviate storm and tidewater flooding.
- Key West International Airport achieved a perfect airport safety inspection from the FAA.

## 2015 GOALS

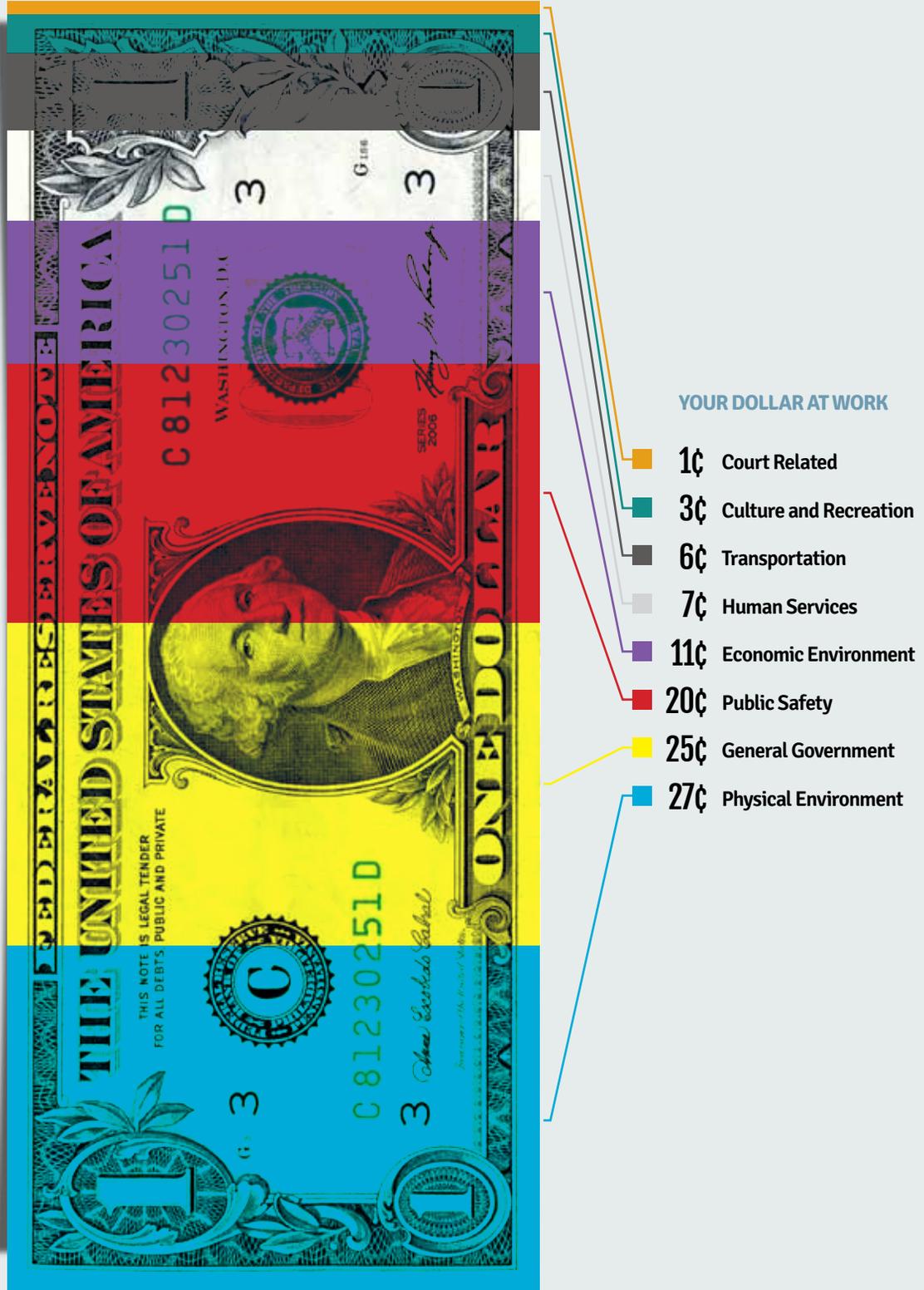
Initiate an Airport Master Plan Study for future projects at Key West International Airport and also upgrade the passenger capacity at its U.S. Customs & Border Protection facility.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Longtime Airports Department Director Peter Horton retired in December, but not before receiving the coveted Florida Department of Transportation's 2014 Distinguished Aviation Service Award.



# FY2015

## TOTAL ADOPTED BUDGET: \$441,711,639



# LIBRARY SERVICES

The Florida Keys first public library opened in Key West in 1853, providing access to books and reference materials that promoted literacy and enriched people's lives. Today, that mission is as important as ever, with Monroe County's Library Service operating five branches that attracted more than 380,000 patrons last year.

All five locations offer invaluable Internet access and a variety of educational programs. They also serve as the community meeting sites for book clubs, speaker series and groups that reach all ages, from Toddler Time to Senior Moments. And through the Library Service's main website, eBooks, eAudiobooks and a digital photo online gallery are available around the clock.



Director

**Norma Kula**

**305.853.7349**

Kula-norma@monroecounty-fl.gov

keyslibraries.org



## LIBRARY LOCATIONS



### KEY WEST

700 Fleming Street  
Key West, FL 33040  
**305.292.3595**

### BIG PINE

213 Key Deer Blvd.  
Big Pine Key, FL 33043  
**305.872.0992**

### MARATHON

3251 Overseas Highway  
Marathon, FL 33050  
**305.743.5156**

### KEY LARGO

101485 Overseas Hwy.  
Tradewinds Shopping Center  
Key Largo, FL 33027  
**305.451.2396**

### ISLAMORADA

81830 Overseas Highway  
Islamorada, FL 33036  
**305.664.4645**

## 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Began formulating how to best use the space and increase services for planned new Marathon Library.
- Beefed up our Florida Historical Unit with a new staff archivist and used a talented team of volunteers to help scan and describe 16,000 plus images for our Flickr online gallery. The rare images already have been viewed more than six million times.
- Expanded the highly popular OverDrive digital collection of eBooks and eAudioBooks to nearly 4,200 titles. Patrons gobbled up the new digital editions, with 18,231 downloads – a 78 percent increase from the previous calendar year.
- Increased the number of Reference Service transactions (both in-person and by phone) to more than 150,000 by using more technology – chat, text, email, social media and the state-led “Ask a Librarian” program.

## 2015 GOALS

We will continue to develop branch collections in non-English materials (both digitally and in print); study the children's sections to create more friendly and usable spaces; install a new system of computers for public Internet access; and work with an architect on increasing display space and security for historical collections.

### DID YOU KNOW?

You can tell the mood of the day at the Key West branch by longtime historian Tom Hambright's choice of tie – from colorful, jolly ones for the holidays to those with the Navy emblem and flags for patriotic days.



# INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Information Technology provides efficient, reliable and cost-effective information management services for all things technology related. We plan, design, implement and support the county's network, computer, telephone and television systems.

We also manage and operate the Monroe County TV station, a government access channel that broadcasts Board of County Commissioners and other local county meetings, and provide bulletin boards for county events and happenings. The station also broadcasts public service announcements.

In 2015, Monroe County TV will premier two original shows: "SnapShots," a collaboration with the Monroe County Public Library History Department, which features historian Tom Hambricht; and "We are Monroe," which highlights the county's various department and constitutional officers, showing what services they provide and how they deliver them.

## 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Installed public Wifi throughout Key West International Airport.
- Released the county's first mobile application, supported by Android and Apple IOS, which provides access to official county calendar events, notices of public meetings, open bids for government contract, county job listings, facilities information with reservation forms and a phone book which links to the Tourist Development Council mobile website.
- Relocated our Internet service and disaster recovery site from an AT&T facility in Miami to a new datacenter in Miami, providing more reliable internet service at twice the speed and at a lower cost.
- Completed a deal to make Monroe County Television available on U-verse.

## 2015 GOALS

- Continue an initiative to provide public Wifi to six Monroe County parks: Higgs Beach, Bernstein Park, Big Pine Key Park, Harry Harris Park, Key Largo Community Park and Peace Park at the Murray Nelson Government Building.
- Will launch a new platform on our website in the first half of 2015 which will provide more details and greater transparency in the budget and expenditure process.
- Will release an upgrade to our popular mobile app, which will include the ability to view live Monroe County TV events and traverse our extensive video on demand library that shows all broadcasted meetings dating to January 2007.

**DID YOU KNOW?** One of our IT employees directed a film about bacon, aptly titled "Bacon," and another employee spins records under a DJ pseudonym. Curiously, both wish to remain anonymous.



Director

**Robert Ward**

**305.453.8792**

Ward-bob@monroecounty-fl.gov





Two County parks – Clarence Higgs Beach in Key West and Bernstein Park on Stock Island – are in the midst of major renovations. Higgs Beach’s \$3.6 million makeover will include a new Visitor & Nature Center, fitness equipment, plus relocation of internal road to expand the beach and better use the space. Bernstein Park’s \$5.3 million renovation includes raising the fields by 18-24 inches and a new walking track and community center will be built.

## Key West



The County, City of Marathon and Florida Department of Transportation have worked together to find a solution to save the Old 7 Mile Bridge, which was an engineering marvel when built more than a century ago. Extensive repairs to the bridge deck, flooring and beams will be done to make the bridge safe along the 1.8-mile section that leads to historic Pigeon Key and is popular for pedestrians, cyclists, runners, visitors and history buffs. The County is funding about \$14.2 million of the \$76 million needed to repair the bridge and keep it maintained for next 30 years.

## MARATHON



The County is in the midst of completing the \$170 million Cudjoe Regional Wastewater System, its largest sewer project. Collection systems and transmission mains for the complex project that encompasses eight islands and 10 bridge crossings will be completed this year, with the exception of Big Pine Key. It will provide up to 10,000 of the Keys’ potential 76,000 hookups.

## LOWER KEYS



# COUNTY PROJECTS FROM KEY WEST TO KEY LARGO



To provide a waterfront park that can accommodate community events, the County purchased longtime vacant Rowell's Marina (8.2 acres) on Florida Bay for \$5 million. The County already has begun restoration of the shoreline with a \$52,000 Tourist Development Council grant that will pay for mangrove trimming and the removal of derelict structures. The county will build new restrooms and parking with the help of a \$130,000 state DOT grant.

## KEY LARGO



While the Village of Islamorada is an incorporated city, the County's legislative affairs department has worked to help get \$20 million in state funding for Islamorada's centralized sewer system. Due to the geography of the island chain, the state's mandate for the Keys led to the creation of 12 systems. Islamorada's, along with Cudjoe Regional, are the last two major pieces of the once complex puzzle.

## ISLAMORADA

# VETERANS AFFAIRS

Monroe County Veterans Affairs, established in accordance with Florida Statute 292.11, helps about 9,500 veterans, as well as military retirees, active duty personnel and their families obtain benefits from the Veterans Administration.

These benefits include compensation for service-related disabilities, non-service connected pensions, burial allowances and widow's benefits, VA educational benefits, VA home loans and VA insurance claims.



## 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

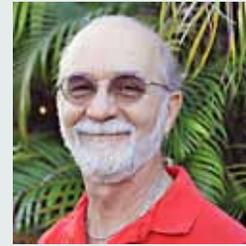
- Increased the amount of retroactive income our county's veterans receive by more than \$400,000.
- Assisted 3,390 veterans during office visits and helped another 11,775 by phone. We also performed 156 field visits to veterans who were unable to come to one of our offices.
- Added 502 new veterans to our service area.
- Received 4,133 calls for transportation and transported 1,736 veterans to the VA Medical Center Miami.

## 2015 GOALS

Work closely with local agencies, the VA Medical Center Miami and the VA Clinic Key West to monitor the local homeless veteran population and help get them into VA programs and establish their VA benefits. Continue to monitor and adjust our services to make sure all veterans are getting the help and assistance they need and earned.

We help people obtain military and VA documents, get health care through the VA system, and apply for upgrades to military discharges. We also transport veterans to the VA Medical Center in Miami.

And we assist veterans in obtaining benefits through the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs. These include: disabled veterans license tags, property tax exemptions and educational benefits.



Director

**George R. Brentnall**

**305.295.5150**

Brentnall-george@monroecounty-fl.gov



**DID YOU KNOW?** The Veterans Administration spends more than \$50 million per year for compensation, education, home loans, insurance and medical care for Monroe County's 9,000 plus veterans.

# EXTENSION SERVICES



For more than 35 years, Monroe County and the University of Florida have worked in partnership to provide the citizens, business owners and government officials of the Keys access to the university's research and science that is beneficial to the island chain's environment and the quality of life of its people.

Extension Services creates and runs programs on a variety of issues, including water quality, climate adaptation, horticulture and energy efficiency. We also help with personal finance and youth education.

Over the years, we have helped form and organize many community efforts, including Florida Keys Land & Sea Trust, Florida Keys Artificial Reef Association, Pigeon Key Foundation, Monroe County Commercial Fishermen, Florida Keys Invasive Exotics Task Force, Green Living & Education, Florida Keys Seafood Festival and most recently, the Monroe County Climate Change Advisory Committee.

## 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Developed new programs to meet county goals and objectives, including: Sustainable Floridians and Florida Master Naturalist.
- Worked with marine agents and County's sustainability office to obtain an EPA grant of \$234,000 to develop canal restoration education and Florida Keys Water Watch (a volunteer water quality monitoring program).
- Worked with sustainability office and consultants to complete the Greenhouse Gas emissions inventory for 2014 municipal operations and found a 31% reduction from 2005 baseline. Energy conservation measures put in place in early 2012 reduced energy usage at those facilities by 23%, resulting in more than \$70,000 in annual savings.
- Horticulture agent and 20 master gardeners held 65 regional plant clinics and performed 48 site visits to homes, businesses and government buildings to trouble shoot plant problems.
- Marine agent trained fishermen how to properly vent and recompress fish caught in deep waters with signs of trauma.

## 2015 GOALS

We will assist in the implementation of the county's climate action plan, GreenKeys!, and other sustainability efforts. We also will continue to provide leadership in developing energy efficiency strategies for County operations, develop and distribute a "Native Pollinators Gardening Guide for the Keys," and develop a program about fertilizer and pesticide usage that educates people about its affects on the Keys' near shore waters.



Director

**Alicia  
Betancourt**

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Betancourt-alicia@  
monroecounty-fl.gov



EMPLOYEES

1 County      3 University  
of Florida

BUDGET

**\$224,000**

(County Portion)

## DID YOU KNOW?

Monroe County Extension Services began in 1972 with one agent who dealt with fishermen, chicken ranchers and garden clubs.

# COUNTY ATTORNEY, MEDICAL EXAMINER & LAND AUTHORITY

## COUNTY ATTORNEY

In 2014, the County Attorney's office represented the County in more than 1,000 matters in federal and state courts, and at local administrative hearings. Legal staff reviewed every contract, bid solicitation, resolution and ordinance considered by the County Commission.

Legal work was provided for a variety of important County projects, including: Rowell's Marina, the Customs and Border Protection facility at the Marathon Airport, the Old Seven Mile Bridge, Big Pine Swimming Hole, the Cudjoe Regional Wastewater Treatment System, Sugarloaf Fire Station, Bernstein Park, Key West International Airport, Higgs Beach and the Freeman Justice Center.



County Attorney

**Bob Shillinger**

**305.292.3470**

Shillinger-Bob@monroecounty-fl.gov



EMPLOYEES



BUDGET

**\$1,600,000**



Executive Director

**Mark Rosch**

**305.295.5180**

Rosch-mark@monroecounty-fl.gov



EMPLOYEES



BUDGET

**\$18,000,000**

## LAND AUTHORITY

The Land Authority purchases property in the county for conservation, recreation and affordable housing.

In 2014, we closed 76 real estate transactions, acquiring 131 parcels that total 32 acres – all for conservation use.

It was the most transactions closed by local government land conservation programs in Florida last year.

The acquired properties include tropical hardwood hammock, pinelands and wetlands that provide many environmental benefits, including habitat for endangered species and migrating birds. We also assisted the State of Florida in contracting to purchase the 900-acre Johnson Property, which is located on Sugarloaf, Saddlebunch and Park keys.

We also manage and restore county conservation lands and state-owned lands that the county manages.

## MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE

The Medical Examiner's Office determines the cause, manner and mechanism of deaths in cases where a person dies suddenly, unexpectedly or foul play is suspected.

In 2014, the office investigated 211 cases. For 2015, the office is planning to work on cold cases from the 1980s and try to recover the remains found by technical divers in the interior of a sailboat, which sunk last summer in water 300 feet deep off Key Largo.



EMPLOYEES



BUDGET

**\$631,405**



Executive Director

**Thomas R. Beaver**

**305.743.9011**

# GUARDIAN AD LITEM



The Guardian ad Litem program is a partnership of community advocates and professional staff that provides a powerful and effective voice on behalf of Florida's abused, abandoned and neglected children.

In 2014, the GAL program in Monroe County was appointed 248 cases, representing more than 365 children who were in the Dependency Court or Victims of Crimes.

We worked to reach permanency for 142 children through adoptions, family reunifications, permanent guardianship and age-out transitions.

The Guardian ad Litem program conducts a variety of tasks and supervises a group of dedicated volunteers, who gather information about cases, give recommendations and write reports to the court about the best interests of dependent children.

**DID YOU KNOW?** In 2014, we had 111 active volunteers who donated nearly 16,000 hours to abused, abandoned and neglected children appointed to the dependency court system.

Staff and volunteers, who must exercise discretion in dealing with confidential and extremely sensitive issues, also attend court hearings, depositions, case plan conferences and dependency mediations. We also meet with the Department of Children and Families, local law enforcement agencies and state, local and private social service agencies. Extensive contact is also made with the Office of the State Attorney, schools, teachers, doctors, attorneys, psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers.

The GAL program strongly supported passage of the 2013 "Let Kids Be Kids" law, which allows children in foster care to take part in everyday activities like sleepovers and going to the movies with friends without the unnecessary involvement of case managers, provider agencies or the court system.

In response to the legislation, the GAL program created a standard called "Participation in Childhood Activities," which removes barriers that prevent children from participating in age-appropriate extracurricular, enrichment and social activities.



Director

**Alexandra Corsi Leto**

**305.292.3485**



2 county 9 state

BUDGET  
**\$197,000**

# LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

## Legislative Affairs oversees and manages the legislative and intergovernmental initiatives and functions for the County.

Responsibilities include developing the County's state and federal legislative agendas; coordinating the County's position and response to pending legislation; preparing press releases, resolutions, talking points, issue briefs and legislative updates; and identifying and responding to federal, state and local funding opportunities.

We work with the County's state and federal lobbyists, County staff and attorneys, the County's municipal partners and other key stakeholders to support and advance the County's legislative priorities and appropriations. We also organize and manage advocacy agendas, meetings and trips for County officials to the State Capitol in Tallahassee and the U.S. Capitol in Washington.

We also are responsible for the County's implementation of the RESTORE Act, a 2012 federal law that established the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund that provides money for programs, projects and activities that restore and protect the environment and economy of the Gulf Coast Region that suffered from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. We work with other County staff to develop and manage the local funding pot of \$1 million and position the County's projects for funding from the Florida/Gulf Consortium share of the settlement.



Director

**Lisa  
Tennyson**

**305.292.4444**

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monroecounty-fl.gov



EMPLOYEE

### 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- With help of state Rep. Holly Raschein and state Sen. Dwight Bullard, we received \$50 million appropriation for Keys' wastewater projects.
- Got the Florida Keys Ecosystem Project into the Department of Environmental Protection's Florida Forever Work Plan.
- Increased state funding for County services, including libraries, homelessness, affordable housing and mental health.
- Obtained \$60 million in state funding for the preservation of the Old Seven Mile Bridge in Marathon and \$3.6 million for the purchase of the 900-acre Johnson tract in the Lower Keys for conservation.
- Reversed the most harmful sections of the Biggert Waters changes to the National Flood Insurance Program, preserving subsidized flood

- insurance premiums for 5,000 primary homeowners and slowing the increases for commercial property owners.
- Secured \$1 million in funding from the Payment in Lieu of Taxes federal program, which provides payments to local governments to offset losses in tax revenue due to tax-exempt federal land in their jurisdictions.
- Obtained \$2 million federal appropriation from the U.S. Army Corp for the Florida Keys Water Quality Improvement Program (FKWQIP).
- The County will now be a recognized FKWQIP partner.
- Worked on passage of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act that authorizes \$2 billion in state water project funding. Most work will be done in the Everglades, which will help Florida Bay's water quality. The County will now be a recognized party and in position for funding.

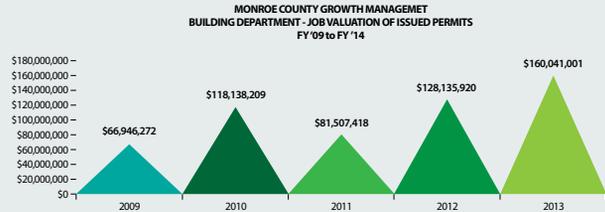
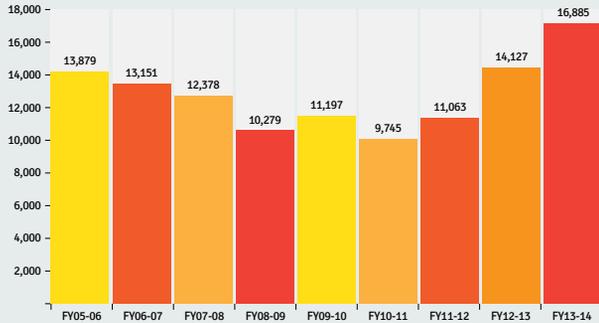
### 2015 GOALS

We will work for passage of the Florida Keys Environmental Stewardship bill, which sets aside about \$25 million a year for the next 20 years for conservation projects as part of Amendment 1. We will submit to the U.S. Treasury Department the multi-year implementation plan for Monroe County's portion of the RESTORE Act pot funding.

**DID YOU KNOW?** For every \$500 dollars in increased flood insurance premiums, there is a \$10,000 reduction in property value. The reversal of the Biggert Waters premium rate increases to primary homeowners has saved potentially hundreds of millions of dollars in lost property value.

# GROWTH MANAGEMENT

as of 11/03/14  
**Monroe County - Growth Management**  
 Permit Plan Reviews | Total by Fiscal Year



The Growth Management Division protects the quality of life for our citizens by reviewing proposed development and assuring compliance with the County Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code, Building Code and floodplain regulations and policies. These have been put in place since the Keys was designated in 1979 as one of four areas of critical concern.

With the booming economy in the Keys, fueled by a healthy tourism industry, the Growth Management Division was busy in 2014 keeping up with the demand for building permits and development plan reviews, as well as investigating code complaints and enforcing code violations. We also completed

a four-year evaluation of the County's Comprehensive Plan, which will guide growth, land use and infrastructure improvements to the year 2030.

For fiscal year 2014, we reviewed 16,885 plans that required permits, a jump of more than 2,700 from the previous year and the most in a decade. The job valuation of the issued permits also dramatically rose to \$160 million from \$128 million the previous year.

We also opened and investigated 1,963 new code compliance cases, performed 17,767 inspections and brought 445 cases to hearing before the Special Magistrate.

## 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Implemented a new fee structure for all County Growth Management permits based on the valuation of the proposed construction. This has speeded up the process and made the permitting functions no longer use general tax dollars.
- Received approval to open a new office in Ocean Reef to accommodate the increased demand for Growth Management services in the Upper Keys.
- Revised Federal Emergency Management Administration's Remedial Plan to outline all floodplain development and enforcement programs the County now has in place.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Monroe County is one of four statutorily designated Areas of Critical State Concern, designated in 1979. The others: City of Apalachicola (Franklin County), The Green Swamp (portions of Polk and Lake counties) and The Big Cypress Swamp (Collier County).



BUDGET  
**\$11,700,000**



Director

**Christine Hurley**

**305.289.2517**

Hurley-christine@monroecounty-fl.gov

# GROWTH MANAGEMENT

## CODE COMPLIANCE AND BUILDING

In the Code Compliance Department, we provide equitable, expeditious and effective enforcement of county codes, while establishing a working partnership with County neighborhoods. We protect the environment and public health and safety.

In the Building Department, we protect public health and safety, property and the environment by providing efficient, effective and considerate permitting for construction and code administration.

### CODE COMPLIANCE 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- For decades, Code Compliance prosecuted code violators without gaining compliance. The County was required to lien the violating property owners, an action that did not really alleviate the nuisance the violations caused. We worked with Legal Department to develop a process that remedies this problem. Now such cases are brought before the Board of County Commissioners each month to authorize foreclosure, money judgment or injunctive relief in the circuit court system.
- Implemented the Demolition and Removal of Unsafe Structures Program. We work with the legal department to obtain court approval to demolish structures that are unsafe and public nuisances when a property owner refuses to do so.
- Implemented a formal vacation rental enforcement process, working with the Property Appraiser, Clerk of Court and Tourist Development Council Tax Auditor. This new approach prosecutes fraudulent vacation rental owners for not paying bed taxes. Last year we investigated about 65 cases.
- Worked with Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission to clean up more than 10 years of illegal dumping on county and state properties around Mile Marker 106 in Key Largo. We also worked with Florida Department of Transportation and law enforcement on a "Clean-Up Key Largo Campaign," which removed illegal signs, unpermitted storage and blight along the Overseas Highway.
- Developed a program to remove overgrown vegetation in canals that are blocking navigation and from dry lots that attract nuisances.

### 2015 GOALS

Complete development and adoption of a Noise Ordinance and continue removal of unsafe structures.



### BUILDING 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The County worked with FEMA to adjust our floodplain regulation requirements so we will be eligible for entrance into the Community Rating System program that could provide up to 25 percent discounts on all citizen's FEMA flood insurance.
- Worked to remove Monroe County from the Federal Emergency Management Administration's Pilot Program of illegal downstairs enclosures (which are most structures below the minimum required flood elevations that are not grandfathered). This means the County no longer is required to conduct inspections at the time of flood insurance renewals to determine whether violations exist.
- Implemented Fast Track Permit types for a variety of jobs, including: air conditioning replacement, fence, removal of invasive exotics, commercial painting, residential roofing, shutters, tie-downs and single-family, non-grinder sewer hookups.
- Implemented site plan checklist guidelines for single-family residence to assist customers in providing more comprehensive site plans, which will reduce corrections and resubmissions.

### BUILDING 2015 GOALS

We plan to recruit more staff, which is needed for our new Ocean Reef office in North Key Largo and to handle the increased volume of permitting. We also will finish two more FEMA audit responses in the quest for eligibility into federal discount program for flood insurance and continue our Construction Industry Summits to provide better service.

# GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLANNING

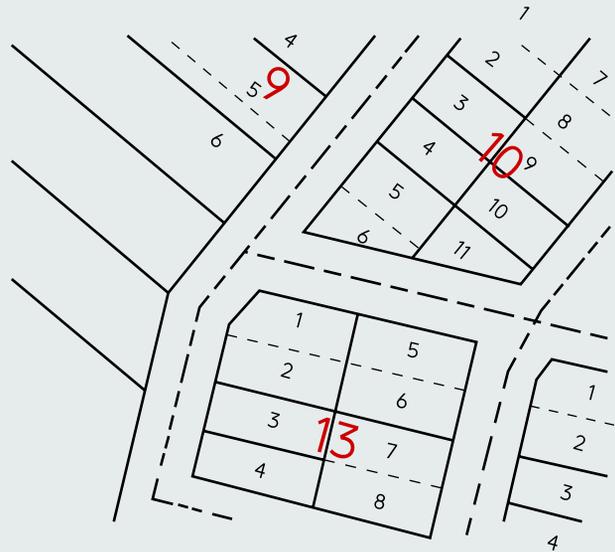
The Planning Department fosters sustainable, quality development in the County, while conserving and promoting stewardship of the island chain that is also a national treasure, and thus protected under a myriad of federal, state and local laws, regulations and programs.

The County adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1986. In the early 1990s the County started the update process to create the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. Now, the county is in the midst of updating that plan. After years of public input and multi-jurisdiction action, challenges and approval, the latest update to the Comprehensive Plan will have policies that guide the County through 2030.

The plan evaluates just about everything that would affect our island chain. This includes land use, housing, conservation of environmentally sensitive land and marine resources. It also addresses transportation, including mass transit, ports, aviation and infrastructure (water, sewer, solid waste disposal, drainage and groundwater aquifer recharge). The plan deals with recreation and open space, cultural resources, historic preservation and capital improvement planning for all County services.

The Planning Department is leading the update process, which began with the gathering of new data and analysis that was compiled into a technical document. The next step was the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, which also took years and included input from the public and multiple agencies.

During 2014, Comprehensive Plan amendments based on those reports were developed during a series Planning Commission and BOCC meetings. Two key amendments: a new energy and climate change element to ensure action to address these issues and a 10-year extension to the County's timeframe to distribute the county's remaining 1,970 ROGO units. This extension to 2033 would give the County more time to fund land acquisitions and other strategies to reduce the demand for the limited ROGO allocations due to the state mandate to be able to evacuate for a hurricane in 24 hours. More information about land acquisition can be found on page 34.



**DID YOU KNOW?** There are approximately 8,168 privately owned vacant parcels in unincorporated Monroe County and only 1,970 more available Rate of Growth Ordinance units to be distributed. The average parcel value in 2012 was \$30,400 for a total of \$248.3 million.



# GROWTH MANAGEMENT

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND MARINE RESOURCES

Monroe County has been dealing with a unique problem, due to the geography of our one-of-a-kind island chain community and our sensitive environment and endangered species that have warranted state and federal protections for both our land and waters.

We have a large number of privately owned, vacant parcels and a finite amount of building permits that we are allowed to give due to state limits for evacuation and environmental reasons. We have been working with the Planning Office to develop a Land Acquisition Strategy.

There are now about 11,000 vacant parcels throughout the Keys (and 8,168 for unincorporated Monroe County) with private owners that may seek to develop them with one housing unit. The State currently allows the County to issue 197 building permits per year to stave off reaching the 24-hour evacuation limit in the event of an approaching hurricane. At that rate of issuing permits, the County will reach its maximum build out allowed by evacuation limits in 2023 (which is 1,790 more housing units).

The Land Acquisition Strategy establishes the need to partner with state and federal governments for additional funding to purchase conservation land within the county. We have contracted with the Trust for Public Land to evaluate new land acquisition funding sources. We are also developing an analysis on how to prioritize land acquisition, based on land attributes.

### ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- County was added to Department of Environmental Protection Florida Forever work plan for land acquisition.
- Processed text amendments to the County Code that are more understandable and eliminate inconsistencies. These include a storm water amendment that allows repaving of existing driveways and parking areas when they do not change their runoff and to obtain permits and homes designated as historic be allowed to rebuild if damaged.

### ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES 2015 GOALS

- We also will work with the Trust for Public Lands and the County Administration on the 2015 Florida Keys Environmental Stewardship Bill, which includes options for increasing funding for land acquisition by state and federal partners.
- The County is subject to mandatory endangered species protection under a settlement agreement between the Federal Wildlife Service and a private environmental group that requires the county to review development for its potential impact on endangered series. We are working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to rewrite the Habitat Conservation Plan and Incidental Take Permit, as well as a new Biological Opinion. These changes will impact permitting on Big Pine Key and No Name Key.

### MARINE RESOURCES 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Contracted with a countywide mobile vessel pump-out program that has produced stunning results. We've gone from 94 pump-outs per month in February 2013 of liveaboard and other vessels to 1,591 per month in July 2014.
- Completed a feasibility study of mooring field development at Boca Chica, Jewfish Creek and Buttonwood.
- Worked on hiring a contractor for emergency marine debris removal; performed quarterly surveys for channel markers and regulatory zones; applied for grants to supplement funds for derelict vessel removals; and processed Boater Improvement Fund grant program requests for improvements to marine resources for cities.

### MARINE RESOURCES 2015 GOALS

Continue to determine development potential for Boca Chica Mooring Field; apply for grant for supplemental funds for derelict vessel removals; perform quarterly surveys for channel markers and regulatory zones; and may develop interlocal agreement with Key West to assist with pump-out service to municipal mooring field at Garrison Bight.

# EMERGENCY SERVICES

Monroe County's Emergency Services Division works around the clock to protect paradise – its precious people and property – with a well-trained workforce and well-prepared disaster-response operation.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Due to its long and thin geography, Monroe County's Fire Rescue service has one of the the longest response areas of any county in Florida – about 100 miles.



We rush to fires, major traffic accidents and medical emergencies, and respond during storms and other events that threaten the health and safety of county residents and visitors, and may damage property and affect the local economy.

We provide on-scene treatment and transport patients to local area hospitals by land. For critically injured patients, we use our Trauma Star air ambulance to take them to special-care facilities out of the county.

We also do a lot of preparation work before emergencies strike. We instruct and drill our fire rescue members at our Joe London Fire Training Academy, as well as provide EMT and paramedic training. We work to prevent fires and accidents, with routine inspections of businesses and multi-unit residences for fire code and life-safety compliance.

Our Emergency Management department works to keep its disaster response plans up to date, whether it's to deal with Mother Nature's wrath, an act of terrorism or a man-made catastrophe. Fortunately, it has been more than eight years since the island chain suffered from a hurricane or other large-scale disaster, but our operation was tested in 2010 during the threat of the BP/Deepwater Horizon oil spill making its way to our waters and shorelines.



*Division Director*

**Fire Chief  
James Callahan**

**305.289.6088**

Callahan-James@  
monroecounty-fl.gov



BUDGET

**\$16,400,000**

# EMERGENCY SERVICES

## FIRE RESCUE AND TRAUMA STAR

Fire Rescue operates from nine fire stations – covering Tavernier to the Key West International Airport – and from Trauma Star headquarters in Marathon. Our certified firefighters also are trained as certified paramedics or Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs).

In 2014, our firefighters responded to 1,334 fires and non-medical emergency calls, accounting for about 30 percent of field operations. These included structure, grass, rubbish, wild land, car, truck and boat fires. We also mitigated propane leaks and gasoline, oil and chemical spills; assisted law enforcement in search and rescue and facility evacuations during bomb threats and other law enforcement operations.

In 2014, our firefighter paramedics also responded by ground ambulances and Trauma Star to 3,049 calls, with 2,000 patients transported to area and out-of-county hospitals. About 20 percent were for traffic accidents and other trauma incidents. The remaining transports were for medical emergencies, including heart attacks, stroke, seizures, difficulty breathing and abdominal disorders.

### 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- We took many steps to significantly improve our ISO classification, which measures fire protection. It means better fire protection and potential insurance rate reductions for property owners.
- The previously all-volunteer Sugarloaf Fire Station is now staffed with career firefighters, construction was completed on new Fire Station 8 on Stock Island, 11 new hydrants were installed in unincorporated Monroe County and another 65 fire hydrants are in the works to be installed in the Lower Keys.
- Fire Station 7, at Key West International Airport, received a perfect score during its Federal Aviation Administration inspection of equipment and tested response drills.
- We partnered with Barry University to offer a first for our firefighters: an in-county, state-certified paramedic program for those who wish to upgrade their medical training in order to provide a higher level of life-saving service.

### 2015 GOALS

We will begin construction on our new training academy, and secure lodging facilities for career firefighters at Station 10 on Sugarloaf Key. We also will acquire property and build a new fire station for the Summerland/Cudjoe area.

### TRAUMA STAR

Trauma Star is our emergency helicopter service – staffed with highly trained critical-care nurses, firefighter/paramedics and pilots – which operates with the Monroe County Sheriff's Office to transport critically injured patients to out-of-county trauma and specialty care centers. County residents receive no out-of-pocket charges.

For an island chain that has no trauma, therapeutic cardiac or neurosurgical service centers – and is isolated from the mainland by distance and a single highway – Trauma Star saves critical minutes for the start of life-saving treatments. It saves people from dying, and can make a big difference in the severity of brain or heart tissue loss.

Last year, Trauma Star's twin engine Sikorsky, which can carry two critical patients at a time and travels at 175 miles per hour, transported 311 patients to mainland facilities: 61 for trauma, 20 for stroke and 7 for heart attacks. The other 224 transported patients were seriously ill and needed specialty care that was not available at Keys hospitals.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Monroe County's emergency air ambulance service began in 2002 flying a UH 1 Huey, the same type of helicopter that flew missions during the Vietnam War.

# EMERGENCY SERVICES

## FIRE PREVENTION AND FIRE ACADEMY

The Fire Prevention department's mission is proactive: to eliminate fires and injury-causing accidents from happening. Our responsibilities include inspecting businesses and multi-unit residences for compliance with the Florida Fire Prevention Code.

We also provide complete and accurate fire protection engineering and plans review, definitive fire cause investigation, life-safety code enforcement, occupancy inspections and outreach and education, especially to children.



### FIRE TRAINING ACADEMY

Monroe County's Joe London Fire Training Academy, located on Crawl Key in the heart of the county, is one of only 31 certified firefighting training centers in Florida.

Named after Joe London, the County's Fire Marshal from 1984-2003, the facility includes a training tower, burn building and classroom facility. The academy also offers medical training and evaluates the practical skills of the firefighters. Last year, 515 people took a combined 801 courses, involving 22,335 hours, for both Firefighter Level 1 and 2 and Fire Officer Level I and 2.

Groundbreaking is planned in early April for a new building with a 49-seat classroom, locker room/bathroom and enclosed garage for fire apparatus and equipment. This facility is needed to conduct in-service training for Monroe County Fire Rescue, neighboring fire departments, and to help accommodate planned advanced training courses from the National Fire Academy, International Fire Service Instructors Association and Resource One.

### 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- We conducted 850 building plan reviews for compliance with the Florida Fire Prevention Code. Most of the reviews required onsite inspection of work that was completed. Many were large-scale projects that required daily or weekly inspections over several months.
- We inspected all five public schools, 15 adult and child daycare facilities and educational facilities that require annual fire inspections in unincorporated Monroe County. We also inspected health-care facilities that offer in-patient services.
- We investigated 20 fires: 14 for structure, 4 for mobile homes/recreational vehicles and 2 for boats.
- We oversaw the installation of new water supplies throughout the county, including 12 hydrants that were part of a construction and development project.
- We did extensive fire prevention outreach to the public, schools and daycare centers, especially during Fire Prevention Week.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Firefighters throughout the Keys racked up nearly 65,000 hours in training at the Fire Academy.



# EMERGENCY SERVICES

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



Emergency Management prepares the County to deal with threatened or actual disasters of all kinds: from tropical storms and hurricanes to acts of terrorism or other man-made catastrophes, including oil spills.

One mission is to make the County less vulnerable. The department does this by creating and implementing comprehensive plans that build, sustain and improve the County's capability to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters.

And when disaster does strike, we are ready to respond, with trained personnel and resources.



Director

**Irene Toner**

**305.289.6065**



EMPLOYEES

BUDGET **\$818,000**

**DID YOU KNOW?** Residents and visitors can receive Monroe County emergency notification alerts by email or text by visiting our new website that was launched in 2014. Go to [www.monroecountyem.com](http://www.monroecountyem.com) and click the big red alert button to sign up.

### 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Obtained grant funding to review and update the 2015 Local Mitigation Strategy Plan. Efforts to update the plan and put in place sound floodplain management will help County residents earn insurance discounts with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- Entered into an agreement with Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition to secure use of the E. Darwin Fuch Pavilion for an additional emergency shelter. In emergencies that affect both counties, the facility will accommodate a minimum of 300 Monroe County residents and 100 of their pets. More people and pets can be accommodated if the emergency affects only Monroe County.
- Entered into service agreement with new Miami Dade-Monroe route 301 bus company to provide additional emergency transportation to Monroe County residents, guests, workforce and their appropriately caged pets during the evacuation, re-entry and recovery following a natural or man-made incident.
- Continued to work with the Department of Homeland Security and other federal, state and regional partners on the sensitive issue of mass migration, ensuring that local concerns are addressed and that appropriate resource support plans are in place.
- Worked closely with the Ocean Reef community regarding new federal regulatory changes to the 2013 FEMA Radiological Emergency Preparedness Manual due to the proximity of Turkey Point Nuclear Generating Station.

### 2015 GOALS

- We will review and update the 2105 Local Mitigation Strategy Plan; continue to grow our social media following; and identify and increase the out-of-county emergency shelter facility options and capacity for evacuees and people with special needs.
- We plan to roll out our new Business Resiliency Toolkit by the 2015 hurricane season. It is a customizable template and checklist for local businesses to develop disaster plans. Businesses that can recover quickly from an emergency also drive the speed at which communities recover.

# BUDGET & FINANCE



The Budget and Finance Office, also known as the Office of Management and Budget, provides strategic planning and support to the County’s government to ensure ethical, fiscally responsible and sustainable expenditure of your tax dollars. We also provide efficient and effective management of County programs, services and resources.

We prepare, publish and administer the annual County budget. We monitor revenue and expenditures, perform multi-year budget forecasts, analyze the effect of the State budget on the County budget and prepare financial information for the Board of County Commissioners and the public.

We also manage the purchasing and procurement office for the County and the County’s grants administration and human services funding program.

## 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Received the 2014 Distinguished Budget Presentation Award by the Government Finance Officers Association.
- Administered the Board of County Commissioner’s funding of \$1.75 million for the Human Service Advisory Board that serves the community’s health and human service providers.

## 2015 GOALS

- We will continue to ensure open and transparent County government by completing the web-based open financial data portal that will provide on-line access to detailed budget information on the County’s website.
- We would like to facilitate a smooth Human Service Advisory Board funding cycle for 2016.



Director

**Tina Boan**

**305.292.4470**

Boan-tina@monroecounty-fl.gov



BUDGET **\$869,000**

**DID YOU KNOW?** The Office of Management and Budget is responsible for the oversight and monitoring of 62 funds, 515 department expenditure accounts and 749 different revenue accounts.



# BUDGET & FINANCE

## GRANTS ADMINISTRATION

Monroe County will award \$1.75 million dollars to local not-for-profit agencies as recommended by the Human Services Advisory Board in 2015



**RURAL HEALTH NETWORK**  
**\$300,000**  
 Highest funded medical service



**MONROE ASSOCIATION FOR REMARKABLE CITIZENS**  
**\$160,000**  
 Highest funded core service



**MARATHON REC. HEART OF THE KEYS**  
**\$35,000**  
 Highest funded quality of life service

## The Grants Administration department monitors grant applications and implementation.

We oversee County funding of nonprofit organizations; apply for and administer some pass-through grants; and oversee contracts related to grant awards that are distributed or received by the County.

We provide grant administration assistance to other County departments and human service organizations; pursue funding opportunities and write grant proposals; and ensure a coordinated response to hurricane recovery grant assistance through the state and FEMA.

We facilitate meetings of the Substance Abuse Policy Advisory Board, and the application, implementation and monitoring of Florida Department of Law Enforcement funding.

We also facilitate meetings of the Human Services Advisory Board, which meets each May to review the applications, discuss the merits and make recommendations to the Commission for the funding on nonprofit organizations providing human services to the citizens of the Keys.

The Human Services Advisory Board prioritizes funding for organizations, divided by three categories of services:

- Medical – which also includes mental health and dental care for the economically disadvantaged.
- Core Social Services – essential assistance with food, clothing or housing; emergency disaster relief; help with family violence issues; adult and child daycare; and end-of-life support for the disadvantaged.
- Quality of Life Improvement Services – provide educational, preventative, training, recreational, cultural services or others programs that improve the quality of life for individuals.

The Human Services Advisory Board recommendations are presented to the BOCC, which they review and approve as part of the budget process. Funding for the selected non-profits comes from property taxes. In 2014, 27 organizations were awarded \$1.75 million. For 2015, 25 organizations received awards, also totaling \$1.75 million.



Senior Administrator of Grants

**Laura de Loach-Hartle**

**305.292.4482**

DeloachHartle-laura@monroecounty-fl.gov



EMPLOYEE

1

# EMPLOYEE SERVICES DIVISION

The Employee Services Division provides guidance and information to employees and the public in order to maintain a well-trained, fairly-compensated, healthy and safety-conscious workforce that keeps pace with the evolving needs and goals of the county.

The division's five offices (human resources, risk management, workers' compensation, benefits and safety) handle a wide variety of duties. They include:

recruitment, hiring and retention of employees; oversight of group insurance and workers' comp; creating and implementing policies that avoid hazardous risks to citizens and employees; investigation of all accidents that involve county employees, occur on county property or involve county equipment or vehicles; and creating and running the county's safety and training programs to promote healthy work environments.



*Division Director*

**Teresa Aguiar**  
**305.292.4557**

Aguiar-teresa@  
monroecounty-fl.gov



*Human Resources –  
Administrator*

**Pam Pumar**



*Risk Management –  
Administrator*

**Maria Slavik**



*Workers' Compensation  
– Administrator*

**Meride Mercado**



*Benefits – Administrator*

**Maria  
Gonzalez**



*Safety – Officer*

**Mark Gongre**

## 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Prepared for the implementation of the new “No Tobacco Use” policy, which went into effect Jan. 1, 2015. Under the policy, which will help reduce medical costs and lead to a healthier workforce, the Board of County Commissioners cannot hire anyone that uses tobacco products.
- Retained Evergreen Solutions to conduct a compensation and job classification study, which found that about 50 employees were being compensated below the minimum of their pay scale and that all County pay ranges were below the market. Employees' pay were raised to meet the entry level and all employees ranges were raised to meet the market. Fair compensation helps the county retain good employees.
- Reduced injuries and Workers' Compensation costs, by introducing new training on equipment and doing more safety inspections and promoting individual safety-consciousness in the field. We also medically evaluated, fit tested and trained 137 employees on the use of respirators.
- As part of a County initiated wellness plan, we increased participation of employees in the Health Fair by more than 40 percent with incentives that included four hours of leave.
- Evaluated our health insurance program and made changes to benefits and required employees to contribute to their insurance to offset increased medical expenses.
- Introduced use of technology from application to the pre-hire stage.

## 2015 GOALS

We will complete our Americans with Disabilities Act compliance evaluation and make any necessary changes. We also will continue to fine tune our wellness program to help improve employees' physical and mental health; implement federal health care reform mandates; work to proactively reduce injury rates and foster a positive safety culture with improved training.

# CITIZEN COMMITTEES

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Works on affordable housing opportunities for residents and workforce, and fulfills Florida Statute requirements regarding the Local Housing Assistance Plan.

**Contact:** Mayte Santamaria, 305.289.2562; Santamaria-mayte@monroecounty-fl.gov

## ART IN PUBLIC PLACES

The committee purchases and installs artwork, funded with 1% fees from major new construction or renovations that culturally benefit the county's citizens.

**Contact:** Elizabeth Young, 305.295.4369; director@keysart.com

## CLIMATE CHANGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Makes recommendations to Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regarding appropriate mitigation and adaptation policies needed to address climate change issues.

**Contact:** Alicia Betancourt, 305.453.8774; Betancourt-alicia@monroecounty-fl.gov

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT CITIZENS ADVISORY TASK FORCE

Assists Monroe County by conducting neighborhood revitalization and housing rehabilitation programs using Community Development Block Grant funds.

**Contact:** Tina LoSacco, 305.292.4427; Losacco-tina@monroecounty-fl.gov

## CONSTRUCTION BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT & APPEALS

This is an appeal's board that hears discrepancies of interpretations of the current County building codes.

**Contact:** Odalys Mayan, 305.289.2583; Mayan-odalys@monroecounty-fl.gov

## CONTRACTORS EXAMINING BOARD

Interprets and makes rules and regulations, and hears public complaints and code compliance violations.

**Contact:** Odalys Mayan, 305.289.2583; Mayan-odalys@monroecounty-fl.gov

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE MENTAL HEALTHY & SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY COUNCIL

Makes recommendations regarding County's grant submission process pertaining to the Criminal Justice Mental Health and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Program.

**Contact:** S. Edie Hambright, 305.293.7422; shambright@keyssso.net

## DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reviews all applications for development and review all applications for amendments to existing plans.

**Contact:** Mayte Santamaria, 305.289.2562; Santamaria-mayte@monroecounty-fl.gov

## DUCK KEY SECURITY DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD

Provides security services for the residential areas of Duck Key.

**Contact:** Tom Neville, 305.289.4311; tomliift1@gmail.com

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Participates in the Navy's ongoing environmental impact study for aircraft operations at Naval Air Station Key West.

**Contact:** Isabel DeSantis, 305.292.3440; Desantis-Isabel@monroecounty-fl.gov

## FLORIDA KEYS COUNCIL FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Implements special projects that advocate for residents and visitors with disabilities and their families.

**Contact:** Anna Haskins, 305.292.4591; Haskins-anna@monroecounty-fl.gov

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Designates and regulates historical properties within the unincorporated area of the County.

**Contact:** Diane E. Silvia, 305.292.6718; hfkf@bellsouth.net and Rey Ortiz, 305.453.8814; Ortiz-rey@monroecounty-fl.gov

## HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

Review funding requests from non-profit human services agencies and make recommendations to the BOCC.

**Contact:** Laura de Loach-Hartle, 305.292.4482; DeloachHartle-laura@monroecounty-fl.gov

## KEY WEST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AD HOC COMMITTEE ON NOISE

Act as a conduit for information to and from their constituents on issues related to airport and aircraft noise.

**Contact:** Don DeGraw, 305.809.5200; DeGraw-donald@monroecounty-fl.gov

#### LAND AUTHORITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Makes recommendations to BOCC on matters related to Land Authority property acquisitions.

**Contact:** Kim Nystrom, 305.295.5180; Nystrom-kim@monroecounty-fl.gov

#### LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD

Provides the Board of County Commissioners with information and counsel concerning all matters relating to the libraries.

**Contact:** Valerie Moore, 305.809.5266; Moore-valerie@monroecounty-fl.gov

#### MARINE & PORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Makes recommendations to the Monroe County Port Authority and BOCC on matters relating to ports or marine issues.

**Contact:** Celia Hitchins; 305.289.2580; Hitchins-celia@monroecounty-fl.gov

#### OLDER AMERICANS ADVISORY BOARD

Make recommendations to BOCC regarding services or programs that would benefit older American citizens of the County.

**Contact:** Frances Carlisle, 305.295.5165; Franc1513@aol.com

#### PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Review existing facilities, programs, expenditures and revenues and make recommendations for improvements and additional facilities and programs.

**Contact:** Trish Smith, 305.453.8808; Smith-patricia@monroecounty-fl.gov

#### PLANNING COMMISSION

Serves as the local planning agency. Reviews proposed amendments and provides recommendations to the BOCC on items regarding rezoning requests and amendments to Future Land Use Map, Land Development Code and Comprehensive Plan. Reviews other land issues, including use permits, variances and ROGO rankings and awards.

**Contact:** Mayte Santamaria, 305.289.2562; Santamaria-mayte@monroecounty-fl.gov

#### RESTORE ACT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Makes recommendations to BOCC regarding projects to be funded through the RESORT ACT.

**Contact:** Lisa Tennyson, 305.292.4444; Tennyson-lisa@monroecounty-fl.gov

#### SHARED ASSET FORFEITURE FUND ADVISORY BOARD

Makes recommendations for grant funding to private, non-profit organizations using money from the Sheriff Office's forfeitures and seized assets.

**Contact:** Michelle Quad, 305.292.7090; mquad@keysso.net

#### SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY ADVISORY BOARD

Review and recommend applications for funding under the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program.

**Contact:** Laura de Loach-Hartle, 305.292.4482; DeloachHartle-laura@monroecounty-fl.gov

#### TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Sets an overall direction for the Monroe County tourism marketing effort to assure long-term sustained growth in tourism revenues and sustainability of resources.

**Contact:** Rita Irwin, chairperson. 305-296.1552;

#### UPPER KEYS HEALTH CARE TAXING DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD

Makes budgetary and procedural recommendations to BOCC in matters regarding the taxing district.

**Contact:** Pamela Johnson, 305.451.2766; Johnson-pam@monroecounty-fl.gov



# QUICK REFERENCES

## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

**Mayor Danny Kolhage,**  
District 1; 305.292.3440;  
boccds1@monroecounty-fl.gov

**Mayor Pro Tem Heather Carruthers,**  
District 3; 305.292.3430;  
boccds3@monroecounty-fl.gov

**Commissioner George Neugent,**  
District 2; 305.872.1678,  
boccds2@monroecounty-fl.gov

**Commissioner David Rice,**  
District 4; 305.289.6000;  
boccds4@monroecounty-fl.gov

**Commissioner Sylvia Murphy,**  
District 5; 305.453.8787;  
boccds5@monroecount-fl.gov

## COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

**Roman Gastesi,** 305.292.4441; gastesi-roman@monroecounty-fl.gov

**Administrative Aide: Connie Cyr,**  
cyr-connie@monroecounty-fl.gov

## DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINSTRATOR

**Debbie Frederick,** 305.292.4441;  
Frederick-debbie@  
monroecounty-fl.gov

## AIRPORTS

**Director: Don DeGraw,** 305.292.3518,  
Degraw-donald@monroecounty-fl.gov

## BUDGET & FINANCE

**Director Tina Boan,** 305.292.4470;  
boan-tina@monroecounty-fl.gov

## COUNTY ATTORNEY

**Bob Shillinger,** 305.292.3470;  
shillinger-bob@monroecounty-fl.gov

## EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Director: Fire Chief James Callahan,**  
305.289.6088; Callahan-james@  
monroecounty-fl.gov

**Storm Ready Hotline:** 1.800.955.5504

## Emergency Management

**Headquarters:** 305.289.6018

**Fire Academy:** 305.289.6004

## Fire Prevention:

Upper Keys – 305.453.8726;  
Lower Keys – 305.797.0875

## Fire Rescue Headquarters:

305.289.6004

**Trauma Star:** 305.289.1467

## Upper Keys Health Care

**Taxing District:** 305.451.2766

## EMPLOYEE SERVICES

**Director: Teresa Aguiar,** 305.292.4557;  
Aguiar-teresa@monroecounty-fl.gov

**Benefits: Maria Gonzalez,**  
305.292.4448; Gonzalez-maria@  
monroecounty-fl.gov

**Human Resources: Pam Pumar,**  
305.292.4557, Pumar-pam@  
monroecounty-fl.gov

**Risk Management: Maria Slavik,**  
305.295.3178, risk\_management@  
monroecounty-fl.gov

**Safety: Mark Gongre,** 305.292.4559;  
Gongre-mark@monroecounty-fl.gov

**Worker's Compensation: Meride Mercado,** 305.292.4451; Mercado-Meri-De@monroecounty-fl.gov

## EXTENSION SERVICES

**Director: Alicia Betancourt,**  
305.292.4501, Monroe@ifas.ufl.edu,  
Betancourt-alicia@monroecounty-fl.gov

## GROWTH MANAGEMENT

**Director: Christine Hurley,**  
305.289.2517; Hurley-christine@  
monroecounty-fl.gov

**Building: Wes Maltby,** 305.289.2501;  
Maltby-wes@monroecounty-fl.gov

**Code Compliance: Ronda Norman,**  
305.289.2810; Norman-ronda@  
monroecounty-fl.gov

**Planning & Environmental Resources:**  
**Mayte Santamaria,** 305.289.2562;  
Santamaria-mayte@monroecounty-fl.gov

## Geographic Information Systems:

**Bryan Davisson,** 305.289.2533;  
Davisson-bryan@monroecounty-fl.gov

**Marine Resources: Rich Jones,**  
305.289.2805; Jones-rich@  
monroecounty-fl.gov

**Floodplain: Mary Wingate,**  
305.289.2866; Wingate-mary@  
monroecounty-fl.gov

## Environmental Restoration:

**Beth Bergh,** 305.289.2511;  
Bergh-beth@monroecounty-fl.gov

## Environmental Resources:

**Mike Roberts;** 305.289.2502;  
Roberts-mike@monroecounty-fl.gov

## GUARDIAN AD LITEM

**Director: Alexandra Leto,**  
305.292.3485

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

**Director: Robert Ward**, 305.453.8792,  
Ward-bob@monroecounty-fl.gov

### LAND AUTHORITY

**Executive Director: Mark Rosch**,  
305.295.5180; Rosch-mark@  
monroecounty-fl.gov

### LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

**Director: Lisa Tennyson**, 305.292.4444;  
Tennyson-lisa@monroecounty-fl.gov

### LIBRARY SERVICES

**Director: Norma Kula**, 305.853.7349,  
kula-norma@monroecounty-fl.gov

### MEDICAL EXAMINER

**Director: Thomas R. Beaver**,  
305.743.9011, d16meo@aol.com

### PUBLIC WORKS & ENGINEERING

**Director: Kevin Wilson**, 305.453.8797,  
Wilson-kevin@monroecounty-fl.gov  
Animal Control:

**Engineering Services: Judith Clarke**,  
305.295.4329, Clarke-judith@  
monroecounty-fl.gov

### Facilities Maintenance:

**Dent Pierce**, 305.292.4560,  
Pierce-dent@monroecounty-fl.gov

**Fleet Management: Roy Sanchez**,  
305.292.3571, fleet@  
monroecounty-fl.gov

**Project Management: Doug Sposito**,  
305.292.4416, Sposito-doug@  
monroecounty-fl.gov

### Roads & Bridges:

**John Glista**; Upper Keys — 305.852.7161;  
Glista-john@monroecounty-fl.gov  
**Marty Slavik**; Lower Keys, 305.295.5193,  
Slavik-marty@monroecounty-fl.gov

### Solid Waste & Recycling:

**Rosa Washington**, 305.292.4432,  
solid\_waste@monroecounty-fl.gov

### Wastewater information:

305.292.4525

### STRATEGIC PLANNING

**Director: Kevin Madok**, 305.292.4480,  
Madok-kevin@monroecounty-fl.gov

### SOCIAL SERVICES

**Director: Sheryl Graham**,  
305.292.4510, Graham-sheryl@  
monroecounty-fl.gov

### SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**Director: Rhonda Haag**, 305.453.8774,  
Haag-rhonda@monroecounty-fl.gov

### VETERAN'S AFFAIRS

**Director: George R. Brentnall**,  
305.295.5150, Brentnall-george@  
monroecounty-fl.gov

### CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICES CLERK OF COURTS

**Amy Heavilin**, 305.295.3130,  
www.clerk-of-the-court.com

### 16TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT

www.keyscourts.net

### PROPERTY APPRAISER

**Scott P. Russell**, 305.292.3420,  
www.mcpafl.org

### SHERIFF

**Rick Ramsay**, 305.292.7000,  
rramsay@keysso.net

### SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

**R. Joyce Griffin**, 305.292.3416,  
www.keys-elections.org

### TAX COLLECTOR

**Danise D. Henriquez**, 305.295.5010,  
www.monroetaxcollector.com

### OTHER COUNTY/STATE AGENCIES STATE ATTORNEY

**Catherine Vogel**, 305.292.3400,  
www.keyssao.org

### MOSQUITO CONTROL

**Director: Michael Doyle**, 305.292.7190,  
www.keysmosquito.org

### TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

**Executive Director: Harold Wheeler**,  
305.296.1552, www.fl-keys.com

### COUNTY ASSISTANCE

**Florida Keys Council for  
People with Disabilities**  
**Anna Haskins**, 305.292.4591,  
Haskins-anna@monroecounty-fl.gov

### SEWER CONNECTION ASSISTANCE

305.294.1000, Lrobinson@meridserv.com

### SPECIAL NEEDS REGISTRY

**Anna Haskins**, 305.292.4591,  
Haskins-anna@monroecounty-fl.gov

### TRANSPORTATION (for elderly, disabled and disadvantaged)

**Maritza Lamberson**, 305.292.4424,  
Lamberson-maritza@  
monroecounty-fl.gov

# QUICK REFERENCES

## COUNTY BOAT RAMPS

**Sunset Point Park**, Mile Marker 95.2  
Bayside, Key Largo

**Harry Harris Park**, Mile Marker 92.5  
Oceanside, Tavernier

**Koehn Avenue Boat Ramp**, Mile Marker  
30.8 Bayside, Big Pine Key

**Eden Pines Boat Ramp**, Mile Marker  
30.8 Bayside, Big Pine Key

**State Road 4A Boat Ramp**, Mile Marker  
28.5 Bayside, Little Torch Key

**Blimp Road Boat Ramp**, Mile Marker  
21.2 Bayside, Cudjoe Key

**Barcelona Boat Ramp**, Mile Marker 9.3,  
Big Coppitt Key

## COUNTY LIBRARIES

### Key West Branch

700 Fleming Street, Key West,  
FL 33040; 305.292.3595

### Big Pine Branch

213 Key Deer Blvd., Big Pine Key,  
FL 33043; 305.872.0992

### Marathon Branch

3251 Overseas Highway,  
Marathon, FL 33050; 305.743.5156

### Key Largo Branch

101485 Overseas Highway, Tradewinds  
Shopping Center, Key Largo, FL 33037  
305.451.2396

### Islamorada Branch

81830 Overseas Highway, Islamorada,  
FL 33036; 305.664.4645

## COUNTY PARKS & BEACHES

**Higgs Beach**, 1000 Atlantic Blvd.,  
Key West

**Key West Pines Park** (Key West  
International Airport), S. Roosevelt  
Blvd., Key West

**Bernstein Park**, 5th Street and 5th  
Avenue, Stock Island

**Big Coppitt Park**, Avenue F, Big Coppitt  
Wilhelmina Harvey Park, Prado Circle,  
Big Coppitt

**Boca Chica Beach**, Geiger Key Road,  
Geiger Key

**Bay Point Park**, Mile Marker 15, U.S.  
Highway 1, Saddlebunch Key

**Sugarloaf School**, Crane Boulevard,  
Sugarloaf

**Ramrod Park**, Bayshore & Pruitt,  
Ramrod Key

**Blue Heron Leisure Club**, Lytton's Way,  
Big Pine Key

**Watson Field Park**, Key Deer Blvd.,  
Big Pine Key

**Palm Villa Park**, End of Palm Avenue  
and Wilder, Big Pine Key

**Big Pine Park**, 601 Sands Road,  
Big Pine Key

**Veterans Memorial Park**, Mile Marker  
40, U.S. Highway 1, Little Duck Key

**Settlers Park**, Mile Marker 92.5, U.S.  
Highway 1, Tavernier

**Burr Beach/Park**, End of Beach Road,  
Tavernier

**Harry Harris Park**, Beach Street,  
Tavernier

**Friendship Park**, 69 Hibiscus Drive,  
Key Largo

**Sunset Point Park**, Sunset Drive,  
Key Largo

**Key Largo Community Park & Pool**,  
500 St. Croix Place, Key Largo

## MONROE COUNTY TELEVISION

Channel 76 on Comcast, Channel 99 on  
AT&T Uverse; 305.295.5128

## MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF MAYOR DANNY KOLHAGE



District 1 / Mayor

**Danny Kolhage**

**305.292.3440**

boccdis1@  
monroecounty-fl.gov

As you can see from this report, your County government worked hard to serve all the citizens of the Keys. While much was accomplished, we look forward to 2015. With the country and state continuing to recover from the recession, the improving economic outlook should enable your County government to be in an even better position to improve the quality of life for you and all of the Keys' citizens and visitors.

In 2015, the County will complete endeavors that already are in the works and begin others that are priorities of our citizens. They include:

• **WASTEWATER:** The wastewater treatment plant on Cudjoe Key and the collections system for the inner islands of Upper Sugarloaf, Summerland and Cudjoe Key are scheduled for completion in the first quarter of 2015. The collection system for the outer islands are scheduled for completion in mid 2015 and Big Pine Key collection system, the final piece, should be done in the first quarter of 2016.

• **GROWTH MANAGEMENT:** The County is finalizing the update to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code, a project that began with data gathering and public input in 2009 and should be completed in early 2016. The updated plan will guide stewardship and development of our environmentally sensitive and unique island chain for the next 20 years.

On Jan. 14, the Board of County Commissioners voted to send the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments to the state Department of Opportunity for review. The County now is working on updating the Land Development Code to be consistent with the Plan. Special public meetings will be held throughout 2015 to review proposed amendments to the Code, followed by adoption hearings.

The updating process has stimulated significant policy considerations on several issues, including: build-out strategies and timeframes for awarding Rate of Growth Ordinance (ROGO) allocations, the ability for the Keys to maintain a 24-hour hurricane evacuation mandate, economic sustainability, land acquisition, redevelopment incentives, preserving

community character, height limit exceptions, protection of working waterfront uses, natural resource protection, climate change, affordable housing, public involvement/information and intergovernmental coordination.

• **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANS:** Paving projects of nearly \$28 million are now in progress for Sexton Cove, Lake Surprise, Stock Island and roads affected by the construction of the Cudjoe Regional Sewer system.

With the completion of a bridge inventory report last year, the County now is developing a \$64 million bridge repair/replacement plan.

The County is working on several new facilities, including design and construction of fire stations and libraries.

• **Parks & Beaches:** Bernstein Park on Stock Island is being redeveloped; scenic overlooks at Higgs Beach and Bernstein Park are being designed; and work is being done to relocate Higgs Beach road.

• **Canal Restoration:** Last year a Canal Management Master Plan was completed that prioritized the water quality for the 502 residential canals in the Keys. The BOCC committed \$5 million to design and implement six canal demonstration restoration projects. The projects will all be put out to bid by February.

• **Legislation:** The County is working for the passage of the proposed Florida Keys Environmental Stewardship Act. The Act would provide permanent annual allocation of state Amendment 1 revenues for water and conservation to the Keys for land acquisition, conservation and water quality projects.

In 2015, the County will strive to continue its recent history of maintaining property taxes at or near rollback rates, while providing services that are important to our citizens.

With your help, the County Commission and the entire County government family will endeavor to make 2015 a year of progress.

[www.monroecounty-fl.gov](http://www.monroecounty-fl.gov)

