

Sugarmill Woods Bulletin

June 11, 2011

Dear Residents,

The **Citrus County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)** will be holding a regular public meeting of the Board of County Commissioners this Tuesday starting at 1:00 PM. For your background information, Commissioner Joe Meek and Sheriff Jeff Dawsy, co-chairmen of the Public Safety Initiative Task Force (PSITF), presented an overview of the task force meetings and its recommendations to the BOCC at their regular Board meeting of April 12, 2011.

The task force recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners at that time was that the BOCC should formally request Sheriff Jeff Dawsy to put together a detailed management plan and a budget which would address a combined organization of the Sheriff's Office Law Enforcement Operations & Fire Rescue Operations. After much discussion, the BOCC approved a motion by a three to one vote to ask Sheriff Dawsy to provide an operational model including a budget to address fire rescue and make a presentation to the Board on June 14, 2011.

The next **Regular Meeting of the Board of County Commissioners** will be held on **Tuesday, June 14, 2011 starting at 1:00 PM** at the **Citrus County Courthouse, 110 North Apopka Avenue, in Inverness, Florida.**

As part of this meeting, **Sheriff Jeff Dawsy will present a plan which addresses his proposed solutions to the many issues affecting Fire Rescue Operations which in the past have resulted in a significant loss of volunteers and coverage in key populated areas of Citrus County, including Sugarmill Woods. Sheriff Dawsy's presentation will be at 3:00 PM.** If you are interested in this subject and are able to attend, please consider attending the 3:00 PM presentation.

Over the past several months, Ed Schillar (as a member of the PSITF) and I (as a SMW representative) have been very involved in the Public Safety Initiative Task Force meetings and follow up discussions with the key players involved. I have had recent phone conversations with Sheriff Dawsy to better understand his plan to address the issues real time. Today there was an article in the Citrus County Chronicle outlining his proposal.

I am convinced that Sheriff Dawsy has done his homework and has a good well thought out plan that is executable. He has met with and involved all the affected parties including Fire Rescue Management, County Administration, career paid firefighters, volunteers, affected union management, county residents, etc in soliciting their input, ideas, and buy in on how to address needed changes to the operations of Citrus County Fire Rescue and how it could be managed in a contractual agreement with the BOCC.

With this new proposed plan, Sheriff Dawsy would plan to open career firefighter staffed Fire Rescue Stations in Sugarmill Woods, Floral City, and DeRosa using the existing stations at each location. He has told me that he can do this by the October time frame of this year. Each of these stations would be manned 24 x 7 each day by two firefighters. He is proposing to do this without adding additional new staff by restructuring personnel and reducing some three-firefighter shifts to two firefighters at some stations. His focus is to provide significantly improved first responder response times and more balanced coverage and efficiency throughout the county.

Sheriff Dawsy has other ideas to build a stronger Fire Rescue Operations force including partnering with the training facility at Withlacoochee Technical Institute and hire instructors as independent contractors to provide services only when they are needed. He also plans to emphasize recruiting volunteers from the ranks of his deputies and approximately 40 have already signed up to attend classes for training as volunteer firefighters.

We have been without acceptable Fire Rescue coverage in Sugarmill Woods for several years. During that period of time, we have not seen any light at the end of the tunnel in any plan that has been proposed to or accepted by the BOCC.

Sheriff Dawsy's proposed plan provides an immediate solution to the Fire Rescue Operations issues facing residents in Citrus County and Sugarmill Woods. I am fully in support of the plan and hope you agree that we need such a plan and an immediate implementation. We cannot wait any longer.

I am interested in your opinions and comments and request your agreement and support that such a plan is needed now. Thank you,

Sincerely,

Duane Dueker,
President, Sugarmill Woods Civic Association

cc: Cypress Village POA, Oak Village Association, Southern Woods POA