

NEWSLETTER#22

HERE COMES DEBBY!!! DEBBY IS OUR FIRST POTENTIAL HURRICANE THREAT OF THIS SEASON FOR SOUTHWEST FLORIDA. WE HAVE BEEN IN PORT LaBELLE SINCE 1973 AND HAVE NEVER HAD A HURRICANE HIT HERE. WE HAVE EXPERIENCED 45 OR 50 MILE PER HOUR WINDS, WHICH HAVE NO ADVERSE EFFECT.

DURING A HURRICANE IT'S NOT ONLY THE WIND BUT THE STORM SURGE THAT CAUSES MAJOR DAMAGE. STORM SURGE IS THE WIND PUSHING THE WATER MANY FEET ABOVE NORMAL WHICH CAUSES FLOODING.

IF A HURRICANE SHOULD HIT ON THE WEST COAST OF FLORIDA AT NAPLES, FT. MYERS, PORT CHARLOTTE, SARASOTA OR TAMPA THERE WILL BE MAJOR LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY. THERE HAS BEEN TOO MUCH BUILDING ON THE COASTLINE AND IN AREAS THAT ARE ALMOST AT SEA LEVEL. THE ENTIRE COASTLINE IS WITHOUT ENOUGH SHELTERS FOR PEOPLE TO GO TO WHEN A HURRICANE HITS. EVEN IF YOU CAN GET INTO A SHELTER YOU MUST PROVIDE EVERYTHING FOR YOURSELF FOR SEVERAL DAYS. YOU WILL NEED TO BRING FOOD, WATER, BEDDING AND CHAIRS, ALL MEDICATIONS, SEVERAL CHANGES OF CLOTHING, BOOKS AND GAMES, PORTABLE RADIO AND THE LIST GOES ON AND ON OF THE THINGS YOU WILL NEED TO LIVE IN A LARGE ROOM OR BUILDING WITH HUNDREDS OF STRANGERS. IT IS WISE TO PUT MOST OF YOUR CASH, JEWELRY AND VALUABLES IN YOUR LOCKBOX TO KEEP THEM FROM BEING STOLEN. NO PETS ALLOWED IN SHELTERS.

MOST PEOPLE WOULD RATHER GET IN THE CAR AND DRIVE INLAND OR NORTH AND STAY WITH FRIENDS OR IN A MOTEL UNTIL THE STORM IS PAST. THOUSANDS OF OTHERS THINK THE SAME WAY AND THE TRAFFIC IS BACKED UP FOR MANY MILES GOING NORTH TO GET AWAY FROM THE STORM AND THEN AGAIN COMING BACK SOUTH AFTER THE STORM. ALL MOTELS ARE FULL FOR MANY MILES. FOR SOUTHWEST FLORIDA THERE ARE ONLY 3 MAJOR NORTH-SOUTH ROADS TO HANDLE ALL THE EVALUATION TRAFFIC. THEY ARE HIGHWAY 41, 75 ON THE WEST COAST AND HIGHWAY 27 IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STATE.

BUILD YOUR HOME IN PORT LaBELLE TO THE BUILDING CODES AND STAY HOME DURING A STORM. THE ENTIRE AREA IS VERY WELL DRAINED TO THE RIVER WHICH IS DREDGED SEVERAL FEET BELOW THE LEVEL OF THE STREETS IN PORT LaBELLE AND THE LOTS ARE ABOVE THE STREETS WHICH PROVIDE EXCELLENT DRAINAGE.

IN THE NEWSLETTER, THE FIRST OF 2000, I TALKED ABOUT WHY THE COUNTY CAN'T INSTALL WATER LINES TO BANYAN VILLAGE (UNITS 10,11,12, AND 13) AT THIS TIME. SO MANY OF YOU QUESTIONED WHY THESE WATER LINES CAN'T BE INSTALLED NOW THAT I WANT TO TAKE SOME TIME TO TRY TO EXPLAIN THIS IN MORE DETAIL. THERE IS ABOUT 3655 LOTS IN BANYAN VILLAGE AT A COST OF ABOUT \$1,200 PER LOT TO INSTALL THE WATER LINES. THIS IS ABOUT \$4,386,000 FOR THE COST OF THE WATER LINES HOWEVER ONLY ABOUT ½ OF THE 3655

LOTS ARE SOLD AND HAVE ESCROW MONEY TO USE TO INSTALL THE WATER LINES. THE OTHER ½ ARE STILL OWNED BY THE COMPANY AND HAVE NO ESCROW MONEY WHICH MEANS WE ARE ABOUT \$2,200,000 SHORT OF THE MONEY NEEDED TO PUT IN THE WATER LINES. ALSO IF THE WATER LINES WERE INSTALLED AT BANYAN VILLAGE IT WOULD REQUIRE EXPANDING THE CAPACITY OF THE WATER PLANT AT A COST OF ABOUT \$750,000 FOR A TOTAL CASH SHORTAGE OF ABOUT \$3,000,000.

THE REVENUE FROM THE WATER AND SEWER CUSTOMERS IS PLEDGED TO PAY THE BONDS THAT WERE USED, BY THE COUNTY, TO PURCHASE THE UTILITIES FROM THE COMPANY.

WHEN THE COUNTY INSTALLED THE WATER LINES TO ALL THE OTHER AREAS OF PORT LaBELLE (UNITS 1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9 AND UNIT 102) WE GOT THE COMPANY TO AGREE TO AND SIGN A 20-YEAR PAYMENT PLAN. THIS PLAN WOULD PAY THE PER LOT COST OF INSTALLING THE WATER LINES TO THE LOTS THE COMPANY STILL OWNED. NOW WE DON'T KNOW IF THESE ANNUAL PAYMENTS WILL BE MADE OR NOT.

WE HAVE TWO SOURCES OF REVENUE THAT WE WERE PLANNING TO FUND THE BANYAN VILLAGE \$3,000,000 SHORTFALL MENTIONED ABOVE. FIRST IS THE \$24 PER LOT STANDBY FEE FROM EACH LOT PER YEAR. THE SECOND IS THE REVENUE GENERATED FROM WATER AND SEWER HOOK UPS. NOW WE CAN ONLY WAIT AND SEE IF THE COMPANY PAYS THE PAYMENTS THEY AGREED TO OR IF ANOTHER COMPANY TAKES OVER THE LOTS. IF ANOTHER COMPANY TAKES OVER THE LOTS AND CAN FUND THE ½ OF BANYAN VILLAGE LOTS WITHOUT ESCROW, THE WATER LINES CAN BE INSTALLED.

WE CAN ONLY WAIT AND SEE IF THE COMPANY CAN MAKE THESE PAYMENTS OR MAKES OTHER ARRANGEMENTS BEFORE MAKING OUR DECISION ON WHAT WE CAN DO NEXT. IF THE PAYMENTS AREN'T MADE THEY BECOME A LEIN ON THE LOT ON WHICH THEY ARE OWED.

DURING THE JUST OVER DRY SEASON IN PORT LaBELLE WE HAD VERY FEW FIRES WITH ONLY MINOR FIRE DAMAGE TO ANY LOT.

THE NEXT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING IS SEPTEMBER 18 WHICH WILL BE A PUBLIC HEARING FOR A 12 % RATE REDUCTION FOR PORT LaBELLE WATER AND SEWER CUSTOMERS.

Harold

HAROLD

W.HAROLD REECER
P.O. BOX 3028
LaBELLE, FL 33975

PHONE 863-675-0215
FAX 863-675-6510

E-MAIL IS REECER@MAIL1.GULFCOAST.NET