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THE NEWS-PRESS

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Fort Myers Beach pier awaits rebuild



In the Know
Phil Fernandez
Naples Daily News
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Lee County officials say there is no specific timeline as they deal with damage to parks, recreation areas

While it's on the minds of government leaders, they say there is no specific timeline. Here are six questions related to the pier and parks:

1. What entity is responsible for the Fort Myers Beach pier?

A lot of folks think it's the town, but it's not. It falls under the responsibility of Lee

2. What kind of damage did the parks have?

"Out of our 114 parks that we See FERNANDEZ, Page 4A



Lightning strikes off the Fort Myers Beach pier in July 2016. The pier was extensively damaged by Hurricane Ian. ANDREW WEST/THE NEWS-PRESS

It's been one of the popular questions by readers since Hurricane Ian slammed into Fort Myers Beach six months ago, as put succinctly by Amber Foulke: "When are they planning to start rebuilding the pier?"



Roads leading to Vanderbilt Beach and other Collier County venues remained closed two weeks after Hurricane Ian hit. Six months later, roads are busy and cleared of debris, and beaches have reopened. PHIL FERNANDEZ/NAPLES DAILY NEWS

Vanderbilt Beach area recovering and evolving

Heavily damaged Ritz-Carlton resort not expected to reopen until midsummer

Laura Layden
Naples Daily News
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

closed. Credited with putting Naples on the map, the heavily damaged resort is still under repair and it's not expected to reopen until midsummer.

The sudden storm-induced shutdown forced the Ritz, one of the county's larger employers, to lay off nearly

600 employees. Rarely has it closed. Ian hit the Vanderbilt Beach area in North Naples particularly hard, with its fierce winds and even fiercer storm surge on Sept. 28. A USGS Flood Event Viewer shows a storm surge of more

See VANDERBILT, Page 6A

FEMA reverses course on appraisals

No 'disparity' seen in Lee County methods

Kate Cimini
Fort Myers News-Press
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Lee County residents rebuilding after Hurricane Ian can breathe easy again after FEMA officially announced owners can use the county's property appraisal methods without fear of reprisal by the agency.

FEMA renounced a pair of confusing and, at times, contentious letters it sent over the past six weeks that accused the property appraiser's office of conducting potentially inaccurate appraisals and threatened homeowners who utilized them with removal from its National Flood Insurance Program.

On March 22 the agency sent a third letter to the county municipalities in which it admitted workers had inaccurately understood the Lee County Property Appraiser valuation methodology, believing there to be "a wide disparity in how the post-Ian (sic) adjustments were applied."

However, the agency went on to state, after meeting with Property Appraiser Matt Caldwell and other county and city leaders, it did not stand by those original beliefs.

A copy of the March 22 letter sent to Fort Myers Beach leadership was provided to The News-Press / Naples Daily News.

"We now know there were no post-Hurricane Ian methodology adjustments," wrote Mitigation Division

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