

# City Manager's PROGRESS REPORT



This 'Guide to Services' is provided to residents and to those who operate businesses in Melbourne as a way of facilitating access to local government. The information presented here is intended to directly assist in utilization of government resources.

The "City Manager's Progress Report" is provided to foster citizen awareness of municipal activities and programs, and to encourage participation. Information here will tell you how city government is utilizing community resources to provide critical services and enhance the quality of life.

As this report will show, Melbourne continues to be a dynamic population and commercial center. As residential and commercial development continues, we are seeing a healthy balance in the type and scope of new projects. The new residential developments include a diversity of designs and consumer costs. Multi-family developments include both affordable housing units and luxury condominium units.

The development pattern in Melbourne actually constitutes the reverse of the urban sprawl that is contributing to community problems in much of Florida. Much of the residential development is in or near the traditional downtown areas. Development in Melbourne is coming from infill projects that use vacant land in previously developed areas.

Much of the new residential development will allow home buyers to have easy access to their work places. At the same time, the City has been successful in encouraging business relocations and expansions at job sites on Babcock Street and other central locations. Commercial and corporate activity continues to expand, providing a wide range of job opportunities for those who live in Melbourne as well as newcomers.

Melbourne is continuing a limited property tax abatement program to encourage economic development, in cooperation with the Economic Development Commission of Florida's

Space Coast.

Areas that have been voluntarily annexed over the last two years have allowed existing residential and commercial properties to gain access to Melbourne's water utility and other municipal services. These annexation areas, all adjacent to the city, brought into Melbourne property that was already developed or which is adjacent to developed areas.

In essence, the annexations have allowed an orderly extension of Melbourne's infrastructure to the contiguous areas. Additional annexations are expected, either to extend municipal services to areas contiguous to the city or to enclaves of unincorporated areas inside the city limits.

Even as we appreciate Melbourne's controlled, positive growth, it is imperative that we recognize the city's position as the very center of a much larger urban area. Melbourne's geographic location, its job base, and its cultural amenities all contribute to a huge daytime population of workers and visitors.

## **TRANSPORTATION CONCERNS**

Melbourne's City Council has taken the initiative in consideration of ways to fund needed road improvements. However, the City's options for improving some of Melbourne's busiest streets are limited because those roadways are controlled by county or state governments.

Melbourne relies on about \$3-million in annual revenue from gasoline taxes and transportation impact fees to help pay for maintenance and improvements to City streets. Melbourne's roadway improvements this year include about \$1-million in resurfacing of city streets.

The \$3.84-million city project to widen a busy portion of Eber Road has just been completed. The project included the installation of a five-foot-wide sidewalk on the south side of the roadway and a concrete, eight-foot-wide bike path on the north side.

The current budget allows for engineering plans for improvements to the flow of traffic on Wickham Road and upgrades to signal con-



*REPLACEMENT of a culvert beneath Laurie Street was among projects correcting hurricane damage caused in the last two years.*

trols at four major intersections. Lighted street signs are being introduced at major intersections.

The widely discussed inadequacies of Wickham Road to accommodate continuing growth points to a much broader dilemma. Brevard County has a huge backlog of road work and has not identified ways to adequately fund the needed projects. Melbourne contributed \$500,000 to a county project to widen a portion of Croton Road, work that is just concluding.

Funding for improvements to the county roadways in Melbourne and in other municipalities is badly needed. That is why Melbourne's elected officials, as well as those in most other Brevard municipalities, asked the County Commission to allow voters to decide if a one-cent increase in sales taxes over a five-year period could be used to provide roadway funding.

It is interesting to note that a recent city-wide survey indicates that a significant percentage of Melbourne residents support a sales tax for roadways. When residents were asked about funding, 49 percent said they would support a sales tax increase for roadway projects. Support dropped to 37 percent when the funding would be derived from property tax use.

## **ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY**

It is also important to note the value of citizen involvement in government affairs and to encourage increased participation. We continue to provide periodic sessions of a Citizen's Academy, a one-day event that allows participants to learn about municipal activities and opportunities for their direct involvement. Last year we provided the first evening academy sessions and we anticipate repeating that program in the fall.

The citywide opinion survey was conducted as a continuation of an effort by the City Council to solicit comments and ideas from the community. The survey questionnaire was designed and administered by the National Re-



*Ground was broken on a community pavilion at Highland Avenue and Eau Gallie Boulevard.*



search Center, a consulting firm that conducts surveys across the country in a collaborative effort with the International City/County Management Association. Results are representative of the entire city.

Those in the survey offered a favorable opinion of most City services and reported positive interactions with municipal employees. While those participating in the survey were satisfied with the area's quality of life, they felt that problems exist with traffic, the rate at which the urban area is growing, and illegal drugs. The City of Melbourne was seen as a good value for the taxes paid.

Those surveyed offered favorable opinions of municipal services including public safety, recreation, and utilities, but offered lower ratings for affordable housing, mobility, traffic, crime, and growth issues. Half of those surveyed were in contact with a City employee in the last year. Employees were given favorable ratings for their knowledge and courtesy. All department directors have now been asked to review the survey results and determine where improvements can be made.

The City continues to support programs to improve communication with residents and businesses, and to encourage participation in government. Volunteers directly assisting municipal operations include 150 members of committees and boards.

#### **THE PACE OF DEVELOPMENT**

A brisk pace of commercial and residential development continued in 2005. The number of building permits issued increased by 27% from the previous year, to 9,860. The value of residential construction jumped from \$112-million in 2004 to nearly \$218-million last year.

Commercial construction dropped to just over \$68-million in 2005 after surging to more than \$150-million in the previous year. The value of miscellaneous building projects has increased steadily in recent years, and in 2005 jumped to more than \$67-million from the \$41-million value recorded in the previous year.

The Code Compliance Division issued 925 building permits for new construction in 2005 and 454 certificates of occupancy. Reviews included 1,716 projects for additions or alterations to structures and 3,937 for roofing work.

City planners there reviewed 36 site plans with 2,575 dwelling units in single-family and multi-family structures. Plans for 10 residential subdivisions were submitted, with 880 lots or tracts, while three commercial subdivisions with 32 lots and out-parcels were reviewed. Engineers reviewed 103 sets of construction plans and approved 82 in 2005.

The Melbourne - Palm Bay -Titusville urban area was recently listed at the top of the Milken Institute Best Performing Cities Index. The index ranks U.S. metropolitan areas based on their ability to create and sustain jobs. Top areas were cited for strong and growing service



*PATROL CAR COLORS were changed to enhance the quick identity of responding officers.*

sectors, a robust recovery in tourism, growing populations, and an increase in the number of retirees. The Milken Institute is a nonprofit think tank based in California. The ranking comes less than two years after our area was judged the fourth best retirement spot in the entire country in "Retirement Places Rated," a book published by the popular Frommer's Travel Guides.

Melbourne's population as estimated by the University of Florida for 2005 was just over 75,000. The annual population growth remains at about 2%. Even as newcomers and current residents invest in new developments, an effort is being made to protect historical resources. The City Council approved a historical preservation ordinance that provides the framework for a careful consideration of projects that would result in removal of older structures, yet also preserves property rights.

Annexations increased the geographic area of the City to just under 40 square miles. During 2005, the City annexed 623 acres of residential and commercial property with an assessed valuation of more than \$43-million. Property owners on Melbourne's northwest flank voted to approve annexations in both 2004 and 2005 so that they could begin receiving City services.

#### **REDEVELOPMENT CONTINUES**

The success of the redevelopment work in the downtown area centered on New Haven Avenue has resulted in a thriving, diverse business community. Over the last year, plans for several major condominium developments in the downtown district have been approved.

A major extension of the downtown streetscape improvements is now getting underway. The \$1.8-million project will extend westward from Livingston Street to the point at which New Haven Avenue intersects with U.S. 192. Improvements are also planned near the intersection of New Haven Avenue and U.S. 1. Streetscaping and landscaping will make it easier for people to identify entrances to the downtown area.

OLDE EAU GALLIE: With planning completed in 2005, a major project is now un-

derway to place a pavilion at the intersection of Eau Gallie Boulevard and Highland Avenue. The project was funded in part by a \$40,000 contribution from the Eau Gallie Rotary Club, along with generous support from area businesses. The work is part of a broader project to create a community gathering area.

Decorative crosswalks were completed as part of an effort to enhance the unique character of the Eau Gallie downtown area. The City is seeking state assistance in a project to replace the Eau Gallie Pier, closed due to severe damage by hurricane winds in 2005. It is expected that the new pier will be larger to serve multiple recreational uses.

BABCOCK STREET: The dramatic face-lift of Babcock Street to include islands, sidewalks, landscaping, decorative crosswalks, and benches was extended northward in 2005 from NASA Boulevard to Apollo Boulevard. Commerce and job opportunities in the area continued to expand. A major commercial development is underway at the northern end of the district, where a redevelopment project realigned Babcock Street to remove a sharp turn.

Just west of the district, on property owned by the Melbourne International Airport, ground was broken for a high-tech business incubator. The incubator, supported with federal funding, is to be operated by the Technological Research and Development Authority, a state agency currently based in Titusville.

#### **PUBLIC SAFETY IS A PRIORITY**

The Fire Department responded to 13,711 emergency calls in 2005, down slightly from the previous year due to the more limited effects of hurricanes. Of those calls, 75% were for emergency medical assistance. The 258 fire incidents reported caused more than \$3.3-million in damage, while it is estimated that \$253-million in property was in jeopardy.

Construction is underway on Melbourne's eighth fire station, located on Eber Road near the intersection with Dairy Road. Twelve firefighters are to be added to staff the station, enhancing responses to the growing residential areas in southern Melbourne. To ensure that response times are optimum throughout the city, a study was commissioned to determine the best locations for fire stations.

The Police Department has added a tenth patrol area to optimize response times to all parts of the city. The City Council approved the addition of five police officers to allow for the expanded coverage.

Implementation of improvements to the computer-aid dispatch and records management computer system -- a project that is costing nearly \$1-million -- is nearing completion.

Calls to the Police Department for service in 2005 reached 108,082, a record level of activity and an increase of 6% over 2004. Officers responded to 2,317 traffic accidents, initiated 22,711 traffic stops, and issued 25,028 cita-



tions. The effort to make streets safer included introduction of the slogan, "Where is STEU? Are They Looking for You?" It is a reference to the Selective Traffic Enforcement Unit, and the reality that officers are looking for dangerous driving practices. An awareness campaign also focused on hazardous intersections.

During 2005, the department added positions that allow civilians to replace sworn officers who are then freed for patrol duty. The positions include a full-time domestic violence victim's advocate, supported with state funding; two civilian crime scene technicians; and a public information specialist.

The Police Department created a Sex Offender Tracking Unit. The City Council put in place a municipal registration program to augment the statewide program. A Melbourne officer is assigned full-time to monitor sexual offenders living in Melbourne and to assist the public with information.

'Behind the Badge,' a monthly television program about law enforcement activities and public safety is being provided on Bright House Channel 15, Mondays at 7 p.m. and Wednesdays at 6 p.m., and also on WSCF TV-31 Sundays and Mondays at 8 p.m. The department also put into operation an emergency alert radio transmitter at 1650 AM to provide motorists with traffic information.

**HOUSING PROGRAMS CONTINUE**

The City utilizes uses a variety of state and federal funding sources to improve the quality of life for economically disadvantaged residents. The assistance is provided through programs managed by Melbourne's Housing and Community Development Department.

In 2005, the City invested a total of \$1,803,891 in funds available from CDBG (Community Development Block Grant), HOME (HOME Investment Partnership Program), and SHIP (State Housing Initiatives Partnership) Program grants. The federal and state funding provided housing assistance and vital community services to hundreds of individuals and families and funded neighborhood improvements.

As a result of the 2004 hurricanes, the state also awarded the City \$447,656 in Disaster Recovery Initiative funds and \$2,449,030 in Hurricane Housing Recovery Program funds to allow a variety of projects on a citywide basis, primarily for rehabilitation of owner-occupied dwellings. The City Council also authorized diversion of SHIP funds to disaster relief in the form of home rehabilitations.

Significant increases in assistance limits approved by City Council made it possible for many more families to have their substandard homes demolished and new homes constructed, greatly enhancing neighborhood appearance and improving the City's tax base.

The City continued to successfully foster affordable homeownership opportunities for very low- and low-income households. Suc-

cesses have come from partnerships with the Community Housing Initiative, Inc. and Habitat for Humanity.

Providing assistance programs for Melbourne individuals and families were the South Brevard Sharing Center, the Coalition for the Hungry and Homeless, PREVENT! of Brevard, the Space Coast Center for Independent Living, the Brevard Health Alliance, Club Esteem, and the Child Care Association of Brevard, Inc.

Grant funds enabled the completion of improvements at Tradewinds Park, Carol Williams Glanton Park, Cleave Frink Park, Masterson Park, and Grant Street Community Center.

Great strides were made in the Booker T. Washington Neighborhood with the City completing a \$521,880 infrastructure project that included new sidewalks, waterline replacement, fire hydrants, and street resurfacing. The Brevard Neighborhood Development Coalition broke ground on a youth service center.

**FINANCIAL POSITION IS SOLID**

The City Council approved a \$119-million budget that responds to increasing costs of operations while providing for improvements in services and facilities.

The property tax rate was reduced from \$4.79 per \$1,000 of taxable property valuation to \$4.74. Property taxes provide more than 1/4 of General Fund revenues and more than 1/10 of overall revenues to the City. Because of changes in the overall valuation of property in Melbourne, the lower millage rate increased revenue by \$1.5-million.

The budget includes a \$58.9-million General Fund to provide for day-to-day operations. An \$8.6-million capital improvements fund provides for facilities and infrastructure projects.

The budget also includes two self-sustaining funds that receive revenue directly from customer payments: a \$2.5-million fund for

the two municipal golf courses and a \$41.4-million Water and Sewer Fund. A budget of \$1.1-million was approved for the City storm-water program, an assessment-funded effort to reduce flood risks and comply with federal environmental mandates.

Grant funding continues to be an important means of funding major improvements and providing services that would not otherwise be available to residents. The City was awarded just over \$5.3 million in state and federal awards in 2005. About \$4.4 million of that funding is being used to improve low-income neighborhoods, provide housing assistance, and fund other services benefiting low-income residents throughout the City. The other state and federal grants received in 2005 helped support fire, police, recreation, and utility department activities.

Numerous City departments have been involved in the implementation of a new financial computer system over the last year. Major portions of the \$1-million system are in place and are providing improvements in numerous financial areas. The City has again earned a professional salute from the Government Finance Officers Association in the form of a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

The lengthy and costly effort to repair or replace facilities damaged in 2004 and 2005 hurricanes is nearly complete. The magnitude of the recovery effort is reflected in the reimbursements that the City received from the federal government and insurance companies. For hurricanes Frances and Jeanne in 2004 that total about \$10-million. For last year's Hurricane Wilma the City applied for a reimbursement of \$817,663 from FEMA and nearly \$477,000 has been received.

**RECREATION IMPROVEMENTS MADE**

A series of park repair projects that were started after the 2004 hurricanes were completed over the last year, along with repairs needed due to last year's Hurricane Wilma. Included were projects to stabilize the shoreline at Ballard Park and Pineapple Park, and replacement of the seawall at Claude Edge Front Street Park.

Many other projects to maintain and improve parks and recreation facilities have been completed, while others are underway or in planning. State grant funds have been obtained to assist with improvements at Claude Edge Front Street Park and with implementation of the Lipscomb Street Park master plan. Federal funding is also assisting the Lipscomb Street Park project and is funding improvements to outdoor basketball courts at Carver, Brothers, and Lipscomb Parks.

The first year of swimming lessons provided by City staff at municipal pools went very well, and the program is being repeated this summer. Work is underway to resurface Crane Pool, the oldest of the City's four swimming



*REHABILITATION of homes in Melbourne was a part of neighborhood assistance programs.*



*A SURVEY of automated defibrillators in the community was conducted by the Fire Department, including this unit at the Melbourne Golf Course. The devices aid heart attack victims.*

pools. For tennis players, a new practice wall has been added at Fee Avenue and resurfacing has been completed on two clay courts and four hard courts.

Storm repairs are also being completed at both municipal golf courses. Revenue projections indicate that these self-sustaining courses are rebounding financially as well as physically. Golf charges were adjusted in accordance with the results of a rate survey, and a two-year recovery plan is being implemented. The goal is to enhance the quality of play at the courses while securing the financial footing of these self-supporting enterprises.

#### **UTILITIES REQUIRE INVESTMENT**

Construction has been started on a second phase of improvements to Melbourne's surface water treatment plant, which was put into operation in 2002. The two-year project will provide for the addition of ozone and activated carbon treatment systems as well as improved capabilities for pumping raw water from Lake Washington. The ozone treatment will ensure that the water quality will meet federal standards for by-products of the disinfection process. An activated carbon system will be added to augment taste and odor treatment.

A major maintenance project was completed at the City's reverse osmosis treatment plant, which prepares well water for distribution to the community. The process involves the forcing of water through membranes. After 10 years of service, all of the 1,008 membranes at the reverse osmosis water treatment plant were replaced. Careful maintenance extended the life of the filters by five years, and the replacement project was performed in-house to provide a significant cost savings.

Wastewater treatment was also improved, as an expansion and improvement project was completed at the City's D.B. Lee Wastewater Treatment Plant. Three billion gallons of wastewater were treated and 509 million gallons of reclaimed water was produced at the two treatment facilities. A master plan for reclaimed water has been developed for greater

## **Progress Report & Guide to City Services**

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reliability and expanded service.

Improvements to the wastewater collection system continue. Last year, numerous sewer line replacement and rehabilitation projects were completed. Upgrades to several large lift stations are in the design process to handle the needs of Melbourne's growth. The City has continued installation of fully-automated water meters, allowing savings while increasing worker safety and efficiency.

The City continued an active program of environmental education, with an emphasis on water conservation, prevention of stormwater pollution, and recycling. A rebate program encouraging the installation of toilets that conserve water entered its eighth year, and has assisted 1,400 Melbourne water customers.

The City entered into a new five-year contract for solid waste and recycling collection services with Waste Management. The list of items that can be recycled at curbside will be expanding to include additional types of paper and containers. More than seven-million pounds of waste was recycled.

#### **STORMWATER PROGRAM ADVANCES**

The City's assessment program provides \$1.1-million to fund the stormwater utility. The program began in 1999 to reduce flooding and to allow the community to meet federal environmental standards.

The assessment funds are being used to purchase property for stormwater collection and treatment purposes. Improvement projects included upgrades to pipes and outfalls and construction of new retention areas.

New street cleaning equipment has also been purchased to reduce pollutants on City streets that would otherwise be carried into local water bodies during storm events.

The City's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System program focuses on the reduction of stormwater pollution. Upcoming projects include the development of a computer-based storm sewer mapping system that will allow for maintenance tracking and tracing of illicit discharges. Also planned is the continued

enforcement of erosion and sediment controls and development of public outreach programs. The City is also continuing a stormwater pipelining program, a process that avoids disruptive construction projects.

#### **MELBOURNE'S FUTURE**

The Melbourne community is characterized by optimistic and energetic people, and the expectations for our future are high. City leadership is a critical element in the community's future, and Melbourne continues to benefit from the generous service of citizens who step forward to serve on the City Council and on volunteer boards.

In 2005, the City's primary water treatment plant was named in honor of former Mayor John Buckley, who served as an elected official for 18 years prior to his retirement in 2004. Later this year, two veteran members of the City Council are to retire from elected service in accordance with term limits in the City Code. We salute the exemplary service of Council Member Grace Walker, who has served from District 4 since 1987, and Council Member Loretta Hand, who has served from District 6 since 1978.

Although there will be no shortage of challenges to be faced by Melbourne and other cities, there will also be ample opportunities. One project that will help position the city organization for the future is the construction of a new city hall building. Current plans will allow for a construction project to be underway before the end of the calendar year.

As the citywide survey has confirmed, Melbourne's residents understand the value of municipal services. Our employees, in turn, appreciate the key role that they play in ensuring Melbourne's quality of life. I am certain that those of us in the City organization will continue to do our best to live up to the 'Service is Our Business' municipal motto.

Jack M. Schluckebier  
City Manager