

# SpringLake BREEZE

*Florida... the way it should be!*



## ECO Park and STA



The Storm Water Treatment Area (STA) began construction in March of 2015 and was completed in October of 2016. The multi-million-dollar project ensures flood protection in the District for generations to come. Over 750,000 cubic yards of fill was removed from the 70-acre site, which is just under 2,500 dump truck loads. It received storm water from just under 4,000 acres and retains 9.5 million cubic feet of storm water prior to discharge. The 1.47-mile diameter was converted into a walking and biking path, and the front entrance area has been turned into a park area with shelters, rest rooms, picnic tables, benches, and grilles. A few more aesthetic items will complete the park. Residents constantly make positive remarks to staff and board about the park; it is used by many; and it has proven to be one of the more popular amenities we have in the District.

## Board Update

*By Bill Lawens, Chairman*

This issue of The Breeze identifies and describes so many good things that have happened to our community, and I am very proud of our Board and Staff, as well as the support we receive from so many residents. Managing our District is like driving an automobile. We get in our car, turn on the key, and this great piece of machinery takes us where we need to go. When there is a problem, and something breaks down, we want people who know what they are doing to be there to help us. This District car was broken down and falling apart back in 2008 and we turned to a group of people who needed to fix it and make sure it did not break again! If you have been an active reader of The Breeze when it is mailed to you, over the years you have read about the problems that needed to be fixed; the options we developed; and the solutions we instituted.

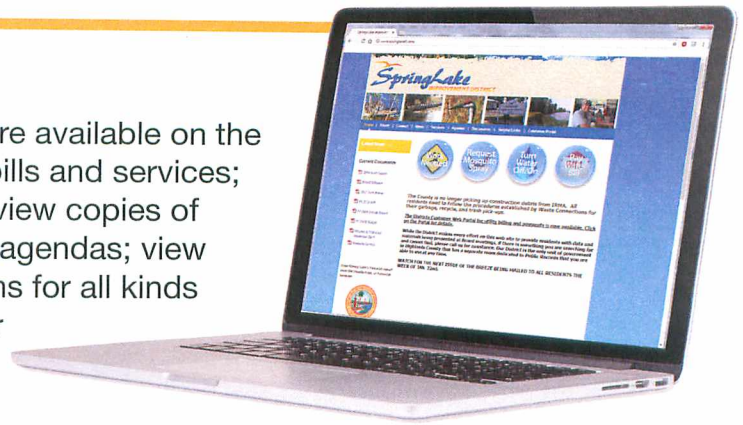
In 2013 the assessments for Spring Lake were \$312.27 per unit. The District was projected to spend over \$6 million to acquire land for our water control plan; construct the storm water treatment area; upgrade the pump station; and continue to maintain a high level of services to our residents. Additionally, we needed to certify our Levee to avoid being classified as a flood plain that would have cost Spring Lake homeowners millions of dollars in flood insurance. In 2015 we had to purchase a sewer plant to protect 325 users from losing service, and had to make plans for a new waste water treatment area.

One could think that future assessments would go thru the roof, and our Reserves would be depleted to meet these expenses. We all know that many units of government could use this situation to raise taxes, explaining that we had no choice given our situation and there were no other options. That was not the case for Spring Lake. Our assessment for 2018 is \$291, a DECREASE of 7 % from 2013 and 3 % from just last year. Additionally, our Reserves and Cash are the highest they have been in many years. Government can indeed work, and the Spring Lake Improvement District has shown it.

On behalf of our Board and Staff I wish all of our residents and landowners a Happy New Year.

## Visit the District Web Site

Don't miss out on the latest news and updates that are available on the web site. You can use the customer portal for utility bills and services; fill out work orders for services you want to request; view copies of The Breeze; read Board minutes and view upcoming agendas; view all current documents; and search the various sections for all kinds of information. Monthly data supplied by our Provider shows the web site averages approximately 300 users per month; over 1500 page reviews; and an average session duration of just under 3 minutes.



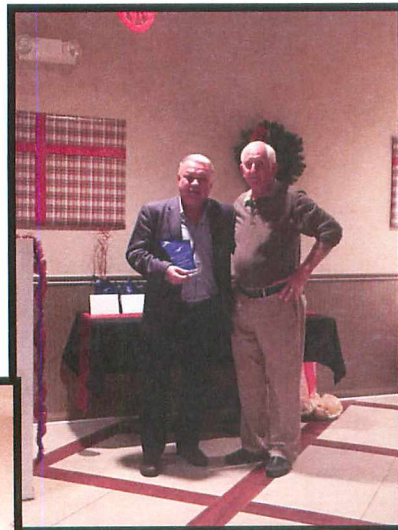
[www.SpringLakeFL.com](http://www.SpringLakeFL.com)

There are currently just under 900 people who are registered to receive occasional e-mail blasts from the District. This was an important tool we used during the Hurricane Irma crisis, and we encourage everyone to sign up. Simply go to the web-site, scroll to the bottom of the home page, and just to the left of the log in key is **Register**. Click and follow the directions.

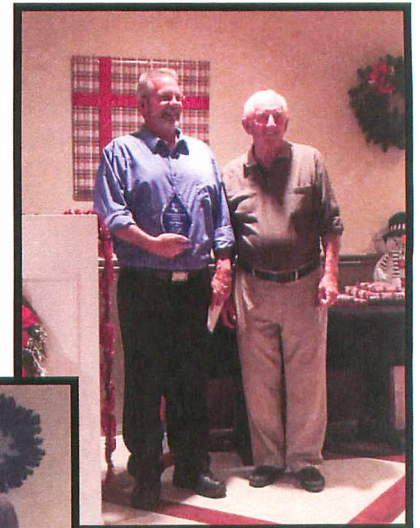
## District Staff Awards

At our Annual Holiday Gathering held December 12<sup>th</sup> at Victoria's Restaurant at the Golf Resort, District staff were recognized for outstanding achievement. Our sincere congratulations to these individuals who make a difference in our community.

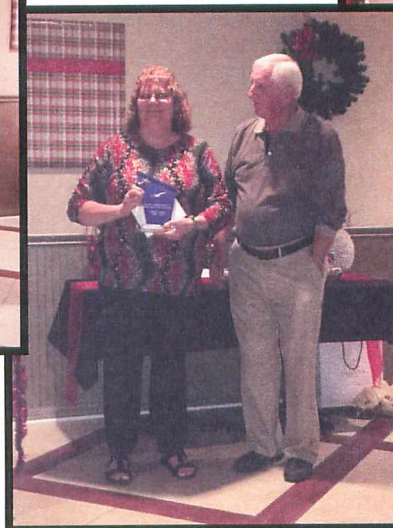
*Tanya Quickel, incoming President of the Florida Association of Special Districts (far left) presented Certified District Worker Recognition to, left to right: Cindy Bacon; Brian Patrick; and Robert Hill. These staff fulfilled training and certification requirements to earn their awards.*



*Gene Schriner, President, Craig A. Smith Engineering, receives an appreciation award from Board Chairman Bill Lawens for his company's 10 year's involvement with the District.*

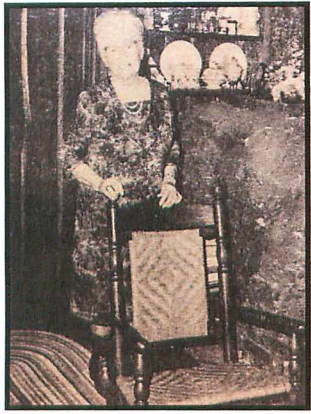


*Clay Shrum received the Utility Administrator of the Year Award from the Florida Rural Water State Association for his oversight of the District's water and sewer utilities.*



*District Administrator Diane Angell receive her 30-year recognition from Board Chairman Bill Lawens. Diane started at the District December 7, 1987.*

## The First Lady of Spring Lake



Those who live on or have traveled Duane Palmer Boulevard, perhaps wonder where the name came from. This boulevard was named after Duane Palmer, husband of the lady who is pictured. Unfortunately, the District does not have a picture of Mr. Palmer. The land that Spring Lake is built on

was a part of the Palmer Ranch; a working ranch and not the recreation type ranch one may read about.

The Palmers sold their farm near Wampsville, New York and in 1935 moved into the vicinity of Orlando on 20 acres of a small lake at a cost of \$200. In 1941 the Palmers sold the land for \$3,000 because their fruit trees kept freezing out and decided to move into the more southern reaches of Florida. Upon reaching Sebring, Duane found a doctor who told him land in what is now Spring Lake was up for sale. After the land purchase was made the Palmers ranch home was built with lumber from a cypress grove on the ranch and started raising cattle. The 275 acres is located on the south side of Rt. 98, at the curve, across from the old golf course driving range. This ranch home still exists on the property and old aerial photographs show a canal and dock area that was installed from Lake Isktopoga into the Palmer property on the far south end. Today, that ranch area is owned by Fr. Robert Graves, a Catholic Priest who inherited the land from his father, who purchased it from the Palmer family.

The Palmers also owned most of the land north of Rt. 98, all the way to the airport. In the early 1970's the Westinghouse Corporation purchased the land that is now called Spring Lake. They received a Charter from the State Legislature to create the Spring Lake Improvement District and the rest is history!!

## Legislative Appropriation

For the second consecutive year Spring Lake is seeking a \$750,000 appropriation from the State Legislature to install waste water infrastructure on Rt. 98 from the location of the new sewer plant west to the Annett Bus area and Madrid Street. Last years request made it thru all the committees and at the last minute was removed

from the final House budget due to financial constraints in balancing the State Budget. We were encouraged to try again by State Representative Cary Pigman and State Senator Denise Grimsley and a presentation was made to the Legislative Delegation on November 20<sup>th</sup> in the Highlands County Board Room (see picture)

The addition of sewer lines, to go along with the already present water lines, will make the Rt. 98 corridor a prime area for new residential and commercial development on both the north and south side of the highway. It would be a tremendous stimulus to the District.



*Pictured left to right is Brandon Miller, Legislative Aide to Representative Pigman; State Representative Cary Pigman; Marty Mielke, Legislative Aide to Senator Grimsley; and Bill Lawens, SLID Board Chairman.*

## Priority Planning Projects Update

Starting in the Fall of 2016 the Board of Supervisors began to discuss an updated Organizational Development Plan for January of 2017 thru December 2020. The Board was presented with a list of Priority Options to consider at a Public Workshop held on March 8<sup>th</sup>. At subsequent Board meetings, the Supervisors discussed the status of the various priorities and received data and information from staff. Residents are encouraged to attend Board meetings and provide input into these priorities. You can also communicate via e-mail, written correspondence, or schedule a meeting with the District Manager. Items highlighted in **YELLOW** are nearing completion:

### LEVEL ONE PRIORITY

Expand sewer lines along Rt. 98 via Legislative Appropriation  
Extend potable water mains across Rt. 98, at Madrid  
Combine water and sewer into a single Utility Enterprise Fund\*\*  
Seek additional grants and appropriations with negative tax impact  
Develop an extensive study for a Master Utility Plan for the future  
Secure a storm water management agreement with the golf course  
Enhance the main entrance  
Update the District's White Paper  
Develop succession planning options

\*\*This option was discussed at the May Board meeting and has been tabled indefinitely

### LEVEL TWO PRIORITY

Develop and institute a marketing program for and by the District  
Continue to utilize the Professional Development Process  
Add and/or upgrade equipment to parks  
Support the County Vision Project with emphasis on the Safety Facility initiative  
Enhance and expand the District web-site and other technological options

### LEVEL THREE NON-PRIORITY OPTIONS (Board still has ability to move these higher)

Plan, design, and construct a new community center  
Rehabilitate existing community center  
Relocate entrance to Arbuckle Creek Park  
Add ECO Park and surrounding land into our Parks system  
Develop plans for future use of tennis courts  
Conduct a non-ad-valorem assessment review  
Develop options for use of the District land next to the office



Pictured left to right: Brian Acker, Leon Van, Tim McKenna, Bill Lawens, Gary Behrendt

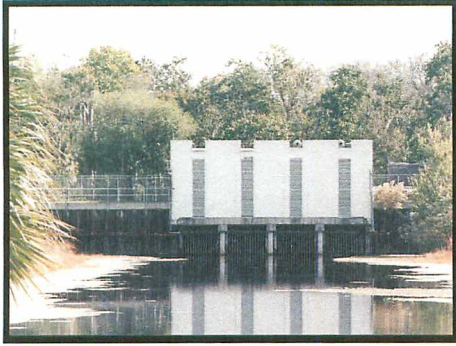
## District Holiday Schedule

The remaining holidays will be observed by the District in 2018.

This schedule coincides with Highlands County, and our offices will be closed:

Good Friday	Friday, March 30	Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 22
Memorial Day	Monday, May 28	Day after Thanksgiving	Friday, November 23
Independence Day	Wednesday, July 4	Christmas Eve	Monday, December 24
Labor Day	Monday, September 3	Christmas Day	Tuesday, December 25
Veterans Day (observed)	Monday, November 12		

## Pump Station Upgraded



Thanks in part to a \$500,000 Appropriation from the Florida State Legislature the District was able to make improvements to the much needed and valuable pump station. New motors and pumps; sleeved pipes; and a new electrical system has greatly impacted the effectiveness of the pump station; very evident during Hurricane Irma and the minimal effect of any street flooding. Plans are still pending for some additional improvements including a new security fence; hurricane doors; paving; roof work; and painting.

Without proper drainage systems most of Spring Lake would be uninhabitable. On May 11, 1973 the South Florida Water Management

District issued a permit to Spring Lake for the construction and operation of a water management system serving 4,934 acres of residential and commercial lands by swales, canals, and detention lakes. This also included the construction of a pump station with two electric and two diesel pumps that could discharge 260,000 gallons per minute of storm water into Arbuckle Creek via an auxiliary channel. With the recently completed storm water treatment retention area (STA and ECO Park area), as well as the cleaning out of ponds and drainage areas on the golf course, the upgraded pump station is a perfect complement to ensure that our District has needed flood protection not only for today, but for generations to come.

## Water Angels

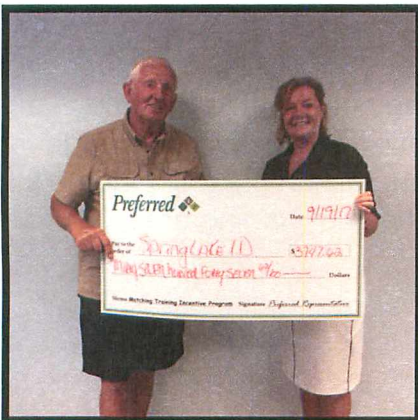
It is never too late to become a water angel. Many of our residents have made contributions to a special account that is used to help those in need pay their water bills. All donations are kept confidential and are credited to the recipient's water bill anonymously. In the past year we have been able to collect over \$1,500 and here are a few examples of how water angels have helped:

- \* Single mom with several children lost her job
- \* Son killed in an auto accident, family needed help
- \* Child injured, mom had to stay home to help and could not get paid from her job
- \* Out of work husband battling thru cancer treatments
- \* Mother of two children going thru difficult divorce and out of work
- \* Husband and wife both hospitalized and very sick; bills caught up on them
- \* Woman battling breast cancer surgery out of work for 12 weeks



Both Cindy and Diane in the District Office monitor water bill credits to recipients. They are diligent in making themselves aware of people in need, and the extent of help that is required. They have many heart warming stories of the appreciation these recipients have, some of which are very emotional, as you could imagine.

If you are led to help people in our community, simply make out a check to SLID and put Water Angel fund in the memo. Your gift will be greatly appreciated and used appropriately.



## District Awarded Safety Grant

The District's workmen's compensation program has been insured by the Preferred Governmental Insurance Trust (PGIT) for the past 10 years, and we have maintained an excellent safety record. District staff participates in many in-service training programs, as well as courses provided by outside entities. PGIT offers grants of up to \$5,000 per year for safety training approved by PGIT. Pictured below is PGIT Representative Pam Hancock presenting a check in the amount of \$3,747.62 to SLID Board Chairman Bill Lawens for safety training reimbursements. Previously in the year we received an additional check that brought the total grant to \$5,000 for 2017. Director of Operations Clay Shrum oversees the training program.

# SPRING LAKE

## IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

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Sebring, FL 33876  
863.655.1715 phone  
863.655.4430 fax

### Waste Water Plant Update

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When the District purchased the waste water treatment plant (WWTP) in March 2015 it was in disrepair and operating under a Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Administrative Order due to its extremely poor condition. If the District did not step to the plate and purchase the plant, 325 users could have lost service!

District staff spent a considerable amount of time and money repairing the plant and STEP system, and keeping it operational. FDEP lifted the Administrative Order with the understanding that a new plant would be constructed by November of 2018. The current capacity of the WWTP would not be able to meet the future needs of Spring Lake, and efforts began immediately to prepare for a new plant. A site was chosen on

Rt. 98, across the highway from the Presbyterian church, and the lands extend all the way back to Duane Palmer Blvd.

FDEP, thru the State Revolving Fund, has approved up to \$3.2 million for the construction of the plant, including all Engineering. The Bid process to secure a contractor is set to begin in March and actual construction should be completed within six months from the start. The location on Rt. 98 allows the District to run sewer lines all the way down the highway, both east and west, to acquire new users. The area will be completely bermed, especially along Rt. 98 and Duane Palmer Blvd., and as many trees as possible will remain on the property.

Pictured is a current plant located in another district, similar to the one being constructed in Spring Lake, with a few modifications. The unit is known as a single train, extended aeration and activated sludge waste water treatment plant. Once the final design is selected we will update this article to include a full site plan, new plant picture, office, parking area, and aesthetic features in the surrounding area.