



# POA Bulletin



POA4US.org

SEPTEMBER 2021

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## UPCOMING GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

### RESIDENTS ARE URGED TO ATTEND THE SUMTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

September 21, 2021 at 7 PM

Everglades Recreation Center

(POA is requesting change of venue)

### VOTE TO OCCUR ON THE FUTURE OF FIRE, EMS & EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION

POA SEPTEMBER MEETING  
RESCHEDULED TO: WEDNESDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 29 | 7 PM

### LAUREL MANOR RECREATION CENTER

Speaker: Anne Bosler  
from Caring Neighbors



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## Inside this Issue

### In Case You Missed It

#### Special Pull Out Section:

The Future of Fire, EMS and  
Emergency Transportation

*Editor's Note: The following statement was submitted to The Villages Daily Sun, and once again, The Villages "Most Trusted News Source" refused to print this important announcement by both property and homeowner advocacy organizations!*

## POA and VHA United in Support of Villages Public Safety (VPS)

As the Ad Hoc Committee for Fire, EMS and Medical Transport finishes its work and appears ready to formalize its recommendations to the Sumter County Board of Commissioners, the two leading organizations representing Villages' residents and property owners have come together in support of the Villages Public Safety Department (VPSD). The Villages Homeowners Advocates (VHA) president, Phil Walker, and the Property Owners' Association of the Villages (POA) president, Cliff Wiener, said in a joint statement that their organizations believe strongly that VPS should continue in its role as the lead provider of Fire and EMS services in The Villages.

In the statement Walker and Wiener expressed the frustration of their members that Sumter County has used the poor service by the private ambulance provider AMR to attempt to consolidate the fire departments. "The only issue that needs immediate attention is medical transport," they said. They also questioned when and why the County Commissioners asked County Administrator Bradley Arnold to provide ten options for consideration. Members said this issue was unnecessarily complicated when the most immediate issue to be addressed is transport, members pointing out that the County has managed the contract with AMR without imposing penalties for poor performance.

At the Ad Hoc Committee meeting on August 4, the committee voted 3-2 on two motions that will recommend that Sumter County create an ambulance transport service staffed by county employees and that the Sumter County Fire Rescue and The Villages Public Safety Department not be consolidated.

The VHA and POA concur with those recommendations, however, leave the door open for VPS to manage medical transport for Villages' residents as well. Members said that residents are proud of and have confidence in VPS and do not want to see things change.

*Support continued on page 2*

### Mission Statement

The Property Owners' Association, Inc. (POA) is the original property owners' group in The Villages. Established in 1975, the POA operates with complete independence from the Developer of The Villages. Membership is open to all property owners and residents of The Villages. The POA is committed to acting as a watchdog to ensure that the Developer and local government are responsive to the needs, interests, and rights of residents.

**Vision** The Property Owners' Association, Inc. (POA) is a champion for the rights of residents of The Villages. Guided by member input, investigation and determination, the POA brings attention to and acts on issues that may impact property values and quality of life.

**Goals** The POA provides 1) a forum for discussion of issues; 2) research and analysis; 3) programs of interest; and, 4) is a conduit for objective and accurate information. Specific attention is given to resolving housing, community and local government issues.

### Values

Independence	Honesty	Fairness
Objectivity	Respect	

### The POA Declaration of Independence

The POA is free of any outside influence. This is the only way we can assure our members of absolute autonomy to act on their behalf. From the very beginning in 1975, we recognized this need for independence, and we've cherished and nurtured it ever since.

The *POA Bulletin* is published monthly by the Property Owners' Association of The Villages, Inc. Articles represent the opinion of the POA or the writer, and Letters to the POA postings represent the opinions of the writers. Care is taken to ensure that facts reported herein are true and accurate to the best knowledge of the POA and are taken from reliable sources. The POA assumes no liability for any information published, opinions expressed, or delivery to any person or location. The POA does not endorse or recommend the products or services of any advertiser or discount partner. All publication rights are reserved. Publication or reprinting of any material contained herein is by written permission only. The POA reserves the right to remove and/or discontinue any advertisement or advertiser from its *POA Bulletin* at any time at its sole discretion.

*Support continued from page 1*

Over the years, VPS has had continuously improving ISO ratings (used for homeowners to get the best insurance rates), are accredited among the best in the country, and have services not provided by any other department such as the AED program and smoke detector battery changing service.

VHA and POA also pointed to the dramatic differences between the needs of The Villages communities and rural Sumter County when it comes to fire and rescue. The populations are significantly different, with the older residents clearly concentrated in The Villages. Response times are a matter of life or death. "If anything, residents would prefer that VPS also handle the transport on scene, rather than waiting for another vehicle to arrive," said Wiener. Walker agreed, saying that the County should only be concerned about what department can provide the superior service. "Clearly, in the Villages, that is VPS."

Both organizations have urged their members to be vocal about this issue and to attend meetings to insist that the Commissioners hear them when they say they do not want a consolidated fire department. ■

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## In Case You Missed It...News Highlights from August Meetings

### Hacienda Hills Residents Win – NO APARTMENTS!

At a surprise invitation-only meeting with the Developer's representatives, residents living within 500 feet of the proposed apartments at Hacienda Hills got a big surprise. Instead of apartments, the Developer revealed plans for 25 villas instead of 200 apartments. The plan also calls for two pickleball courts and a resort-style swimming pool. The site plan does not include a restaurant as was previously committed.

Residents are thrilled and relieved that they won't be dealing with as many as 200 apartment units, the traffic, noise and other issues that they feared.

### Support for PWAC 2 Waning

Sticker shock for Community Development District (CDD) 12's Board of Supervisors and a seeming unwillingness by the Sumter Landing Community Development District (SLCDD) to negotiate new terms on the original Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC) agreements may signal the end of discussions for creating a second PWAC for Districts south of CR 44 (currently CDDs 12 & 13.)

CDD 12's supervisors learned at their August meeting that the initial cost to fund PWAC 2 would be \$688,000 or a \$110 increase per rooftop for residents in their district. Andrew Bilardello, the supervisor who suggested forming the new shared-expense fund says now he could not vote for it.

Forming a second PWAC would also require the agreement of all parties to the original agreement (and the subsequent amendments) which includes CDDs 5 – 11 and the SLCDD and Brownwood Districts. CDD 7 sent a letter to the SLCDD last month asking for consideration of several changes, but SLCDD attorney Lewis Stone indicated that while the SLCDD has not completed its review, most of the changes are not likely to be agreed to.

All other CDDs involved have approved the agreement, including CDD 5 on a split vote of 3-2. CDD 5 was the first to sign on to the original Project Wide Fund and PWAC. Creating PWAC 2 would save them \$208,708.

### Lady Lake Responds to Developer Lawsuit

Attorneys for the Town of Lady Lake have asked for oral arguments in the lawsuit brought by the Developer over the February 3-2 vote of the Town's Commission to turn down the plan for up to 45 apartments on the second floors of commercial buildings in the Spanish Springs town square. The Developer wanted to start with seven apartments at the former Katie Belle's club.

The Developer claims that the town misapplied the law, but the town's attorney believes oral arguments will help the court understand the issues and provide an opportunity to answer specific questions.

The court has not yet responded to the request.

### CDDs 2 & 10 to Hold Public Hearings

Two CDDs whose Boards of Supervisors voted in the preliminary budget process for 8% increases in their annual maintenance assessments will hold public hearings in September.

*In Case You Missed It continued on page 5*

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*In Case You Missed It continued from page 4*

CDD 2's increase would amount to an average annual increase of \$14.47 for villa owners, a \$108.38 annual increase for Harmeswood unit owners and an average increase of \$26.80 for the other units. The public hearing will be held on September 10 at 9:30 AM at Savannah Center.

CDD 10 has not increased its maintenance assessments since its inception. Villa owners will pay an average annual increase of \$25.72, premier unit owners \$85.23, and all other unit owners will pay an average annual increase of \$42.76. The CDD 10 public hearing is scheduled on September 13 at 3 PM at Savannah Center, followed by the adoption of the Final FY 21-22 budget.

**CDD 12 to Join Deed Compliance**

CDD 12 is expected to adopt a Rule to implement Deed Compliance and Architectural Review Committee (ARC) reviews at its September meeting. Residents seem to be welcoming the Rule to establish the consistent standards that are maintained in other districts. Several information sessions for residents were held in August.

*In Case You Missed It continued on page 8*

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# of Residents at address below \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Village Name \_\_\_\_\_

Unit # (see Villages ID/UL) \_\_\_\_\_ Villa Name (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

2nd Resident First & Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Relation \_\_\_\_\_

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*In Case You Missed It continued from page 5*

## First Responders Recreation Center Progress Continues

The shaping of the Putt-n-Play course is in progress and the sprigging of the grass for the Putt-n-Play is scheduled to be completed by the end of September 2021 which will ensure the proper amount of time is allowed for growth. The Lawn Bowling Field herringbone irrigation system is scheduled to be installed with 12" of sand for proper drainage. The Recreation Center HVAC duct work installation is 90% complete. To date, 9 of the 11 construction permits have been reviewed and approved by the Marion County Building Department (Still under review are the Recreation Center and one of the pavilion permits). The interior framing is 80% complete.



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## Resident Academy

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Dates available for registration:

November 15, 2021 at the Rohan Regional Recreation Complex from 8:30 am - 1:30 pm  
January 19, 2022 at the Savannah Regional Recreation Complex from 8:30 am - 1:30 pm  
April 20, 2022 at the Rohan Regional Recreation Complex from 8:30 am - 1:30 pm

For additional information, please visit [DistrictGov.org](http://DistrictGov.org) or contact the District Customer Service Center at 352-753-4508. ■



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# POA Bulletin



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SPECIAL SECTION SEPTEMBER 2021

FREE COPY Issue 47.09 | Circulation 63,370

## FIRE, EMS & EMERGENCY TRANSPORT – Who has the Capacity to Meet Villages Residents' Expectations?

VILLAGES PUBLIC SAFETY

**Sumter County Commissioners: Vote for OPTION 9**



The Ad Hoc Fire, EMS & Emergency Transport Committee completed its work in August, and at its meeting on August 25 the Sumter County Board of Commissioners indicated it would vote on the future of Fire, EMS, and Emergency Transportation services at its meeting on September 21.

**The POA calls on the Commissioners to move the venue of the meeting to a larger location (Savannah Center) and urges ALL residents who are able to attend the meeting to voice their support for the Villages Public Safety.**

“It ain’t broke” so please don’t try to fix it! The pages of this special section will show Villages residents and the Commissioners that residents have everything to lose and nothing to gain in this ill-advised attempt to combine the fire departments of The Villages and Sumter County.

The only problem that should have been addressed immediately is the poor performance of the current ambulance transport company, AMR. If the County administration cannot effectively manage this contract why should residents believe they are capable of managing a combined fire department?

The POA and residents are concerned about quality services for ALL residents of Sumter County. Keeping the two fire departments separate will not diminish quality for either district, and because of agreements that already exist – **and work** – fire and EMS services won’t change.

The Villages and its residents have already invested MILLIONS in equipment, structures and personnel. What more will it cost to reinvent an already well-oiled machine?



**READ ON...**

# Protecting VPS Assets

**The Villages Public Safety Department has assets that cost more than \$21 MILLION! What would happen to that investment – paid for by Villages residents – if the fire departments were combined?**

No one seems to know the answer to that question, or what Sumter County would do to provide the same facilities and equipment. Would they have to buy it from the Villages Community Development District or the Sumter Landing Community Development District? Residents have already “bought” most of those assets from the Developer through the Amenity Sales of 2003 and 2016. Would they now, as Sumter County residents, have to “buy” them again? Table B shows that of the 9 fire stations operated by VPSD, Sumter County owns two of them with Interlocal agreements in place with the VCCDD.

**How will VPS be able to continue to operate it’s stations outside of Sumter County? And, at what cost? THIS IS AN ISSUE THAT IMPACTS ALL VILLAGES RESIDENTS.**

Table A provides a summary of the VPSD assets and Table B shows the ownership of fire stations and apparatus currently operated by the VPSD.

**TABLE A VPSD Asset Summary**

	Cost	Accumulated Depreciation	Book Value
Land	1,427,518.45	0.00	1,427,518.45
Buildings & Structures	5,172,908.50	1,091,639.04	4,081,269.46
Equipment	1,711,061.19	0.00	1,711,061.19
Equip & Furniture	12,250,754.21	6,125,364.62	6,125,389.59
Leasehold Improvements	492,166.59	186,888.16	305,278.43
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>21,054,408.94</b>	<b>7,403,891.82</b>	<b>13,650,517.12</b>

**TABLE B VPSD Equipment Ownership & Funding**

FIRE STATIONS				
Station	Location	Owner	Funding	County
40	2455 Parr Drive	SLCDD	Acquired in 2016 Amenity Sale -SLAD (Lease with VCCDD)	Sumter
41	8013 E CR 466	Sumter County BOCC	VCCDD Interlocal Agreement with Sumter Co	Sumter
42	17202 SE Belle Meade Circle	VCCDD	Acquired in 2003 Amenity Sale - RAD	Marion
43	1419 Paradise Dr	VCCDD	Quit Claim Deed 3/26/04 - VLS to VCCDD	Lake
44	3035 South Morse Blvd	VCCDD	Impact Fees - Sumter County	Sumter
45	3555 S. Buena Vista Blvd	VCCDD	Impact Fees - Sumter County	Sumter
46	3290 CR 521	Sumter County BOCC	VCCDD INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH SUMTER CO	Sumter
47	4856 South Morse Blvd	The Villages Land Operating Company	LEASED BY (VCCDD)	Sumter
51	1231 Bonita Blvd	SLCDD	Acquired In 2016 Amenity Sale - Slad (Lease With VCCDD)	Sumter
APPARATUS				
Station	Location	Owner	Equipment Type	Funding
44	3035 South Morse Blvd	VCCDD	75FT Aerial "Quint" Truck	Impact Fees
44	3035 South Morse Blvd	VCCDD	Quick Response Vehicle	Impact Fees
44	3035 South Morse Blvd	VCCDD	Vehicle For Deputy Chief	Impact Fees
44	3035 South Morse Blvd	VCCDD	Cargo Van	Impact Fees
45	3555 S. Buena Vista Blvd	VCCDD	Quick Response Vehicle	Impact Fees

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# What Villages Residents Stand to Lose

Response Times – currently significantly lower than Sumter County Fire

ISO Ratings could be affected, also causing insurance rates to go up

Other services provided – fire/CO battery replacements, CPR, AED Program, community involvement

Potential loss of experienced, trained personnel if departments are combined

The Village Center Community Development District (VCCDD) engaged the J Angle Group, LLC (JAG) in September 2020 to perform a review of current Villages Public Safety Department (VPSD) governance and associated funding to develop options for the VCCDD to consider as VPSD continues to grow to meet the expanding needs of The Villages and its' service area into the future. This comprehensive report examines current services, governance, and funding of the VPSD. Historical and current financial resources, costs of providing services and funding processes/mechanisms are reviewed, along with operational, administrative, and political facets. Benchmarking has been completed when appropriate.

The study also collected citizen data, including the following sampling of citizen comments concerning the top five service expectations:

- **Rapid and efficient response to medical and fire emergencies.** Speedy response. Timely response. Quick response to emergency events.
- **Constant training and practice to assure efficient emergency response.** Firefighters and responders knowledgeable of and able to answer questions. Appropriate training. Training. Well trained. High skill level.
- **Top-notch equipment and vehicles.** Maintain equipment. Good equipment. Fire equipment constantly kept updated and in top condition. Equipment upgrades.
- **Great EMT training with the community.** Availability and support for public CPR training. Life safety education. Educate community. Educate the public.
- **Appropriate staffing.** Staffing four people per truck. Staffing levels. Enough responders at each station. Staffing equal to growth. Expand as needed.

Citizen input and their willingness to fund desired services is a primary driver for the VPSD long-range growth plan. It is important to understand that staff does not drive desired service and resource needs – citizen expectations do. The District and VPSD have done an outstanding job in gauging community needs and service level expectations.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**At the August 4th Ad Hoc Committee meeting, the Committee voted to make their recommendation to the BOCC of keeping The Villages Fire Rescue and Sumter County Fire as separate departments and not consolidate The Villages Fire Rescue with Sumter County. Do we still need to attend Sumter County Board of County Commissioners meetings?**

YES! While the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendation to the Sumter County Commissioners is not to consolidate the fire departments, the Sumter County Commissioners have the ultimate authority and can override the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations.

**What are some potential outcomes/impacts if The Villages Fire Rescue (VFR) is consolidated with Sumter County?**

**Residents of The Villages/Community** – The level of service that The Villages Fire Rescue currently provides could drastically be reduced, including but not limited to: Smoke Detector Program, Neighbors Helping Neighbors, AED Program, CPR/AED classes, CERT, staffing, less desirable ISO rating (affects insurance premiums of residential and commercial properties), response times, citizen, and firefighter safety.

**Response Area** – A consolidation could fragment high quality, uniform levels of response by VFR within Sumter County, Lady Lake, Marion County, Fruitland Park, and soon to be the City of Leesburg as these entities are currently within VFR's primary response area. There will be three stations remaining in The Villages outside of Sumter County to provide coverage to residents of The Villages living within Lady Lake, Fruitland Park and Leesburg. This could result in a decrease of the current level of quality, staffing, and services that residents of The Villages as a whole have grown to expect and appreciate over the past 20 years.

**The Villages Fire Rescue firefighters/personnel** – The firefighters and personnel of The Villages Fire Rescue face the following potential impacts: pension plan changes, benefit changes, loss of seniority/rank, pay decreases, and loss of employment.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ continued from page 11

### Sumter County Fire/EMS is a rural department as opposed to The Villages Fire Rescue which is an urban department. How would a consolidation affect operations?

**Staffing** — The Villages Fire Rescue has four firefighters with a minimum staffing of three on an engine, Sumter County has three firefighters with a minimum staffing of two on an engine. This affects the ability to complete critical tasks on scenes and form effective response force on a structure fire. The Villages is a densely populated, rapidly urbanizing community that requires a greater concentration of resources to achieve industry standard response criteria. Consolidation could potentially dilute this level of resources creating longer response times more often found with rural communities.

**Services** — The Villages Fire Rescue offers unique and very strong customer-based services that Sumter County does not offer such as: the Smoke Detector Program, CERT and CERT Firefighter rehab, and the Neighbors helping Neighbors AED program which currently assists in The Villages Fire Rescue's cardiac save rate of 15%, which is higher than the National average.

### How many Firefighters are employed by the Villages Fire Rescue?

The Villages Fire Rescue currently employs a grand total of 170 personnel, 150 are firefighters. Our firefighters respond out of 9 stations, with 50 firefighters on duty each day. 61% of our firefighters are additionally certified as Paramedics, 39% of our firefighters are additionally certified as EMTs.

### What is a QRV?

A QRV is the acronym for Quick Response Vehicle. Presently, The Villages Fire Rescue deploys seven QRVs throughout the District. The Villages Fire Rescue's QRVs are equipped to handle a variety of emergency and medical situations. The Villages Fire Rescue utilizes these QRVs to improve and enhance our rapid response times.

### How many stations and apparatus are operated by The Villages Fire Rescue within its service area of 90 square miles?

**Stations** — The Villages Fire Rescue has a total of 9 fire stations. Each station is placed strategically at 2 to 2.5 miles apart from each other throughout The Villages.

**Apparatus** — 5 fire engines, 3 ladder trucks, 5 quick response vehicles (QRV), 2 quick attack response vehicles, and 1 heavy rescue unit. Grand total of 16 apparatus, all of which are additionally certified through the State of Florida and staffed to provide advanced life support (paramedic) care and treatment.

### I heard Chief Cain proposed an Independent Special Fire Control District for The Villages. What is an Independent Special Fire Control District and how would it affect my taxes?

Independent Special Fire Control Districts under Florida State Statute Chapter 191 means an independent special district as defined in s. 189.403, created by special law or general law of local application, providing fire suppression and related activities within the jurisdictional

boundaries of the district. Throughout the State of Florida, there are 62 special fire control districts, of which 53 are independent. Formation of such a district, with few exceptions, is solely granted by the Florida legislature and is a good faith effort to offer a middle ground for both The District and Sumter County. Formation of an Independent Special Fire Control District provides VFR with the most financial accountability and transparency, operational autonomy, and affords VFR the opportunity to continue to provide its current urban levels of services. Additionally, formation of an Independent District ensures continuity of services currently provided by VFR to residents within all areas of The Villages outside of Sumter County. Creation of an independent district would alleviate the financial burden on the Sumter County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) providing it with the opportunity to reduce expenditures from the Sumter County general fund (both its non-ad valorem fire assessment and other general fund revenues) which currently supports fire services. An independent special fire control district is controlled by an elected board of commissioners who reside within the district that are elected by the residents within the district.

FAQ continued on page 13

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ continued from page 12

### What are the benefits of creating an Independent Special Fire Control District?

The benefits of creating such an Independent Special District include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Reduced strain on the County's general fund.
- Special districts provide and maintain specifically focused vital infrastructure and services.
- Special Fire Control Districts collect and utilize revenue for one purpose: fire protection/fire services/fire-EMS services. This revenue does not get commingled with other general fund revenues and are used exclusively for services provided by VPSD. Citizen tax dollars are used only for the services they pay for which provides for complete transparency.
- Provides greater uniformity in operations and authority through local control and oversight. The citizens select board members to oversee those services for which they are paying.
- Standards, direction, and procedures concerning operations and governance are locally controlled and specific to the community served.
- Provides greater uniformity in financing authority without hampering efficiency and effectiveness of currently authorized and implemented methods and procedures of raising revenue.

Improved communication and coordination between local governments in respect to short-range and long-range planning to meet the service delivery demands while maintaining fiscal responsibility and stewardship, with the potential to diversify revenue sources.

### What is an ad valorem tax versus non-ad valorem fire assessment?

An ad valorem tax is a tax based on the assessed value of an item, such as real estate or personal property. The most common ad valorem taxes are property taxes levied on real estate.

The non-ad valorem fire assessment is a common mechanism used in Florida to fund fire services. The non-ad valorem fire assessment is an annual fee charged to improved parcels that is often, but not always, tied in some way to the level of risk related to the property. There must be a demonstrable direct fire service benefit to the property for which the fee is charged.

### How is the Villages Fire Rescue currently funded?

Currently the VFR is funded by The Villages amenity fees, interlocal agreements for service, and intergovernmental transfers. In Sumter County, there is a transfer of funds from Sumter County to The Villages for fire protection services. The funds that make up the transfers are a mix of a \$124 per rooftop non ad valorem assessment and funds from the County General Fund. Therefore, a resident from The Villages of Sumter County pays for the VFR services through amenity fees, non-ad valorem fire assessments through Sumter County, and through a portion of their ad-valorem tax for the Sumter County General Fund.

### Why does VFR send a fire truck when I call 911 for an ambulance?

VFR will many times arrive at an incident first because it is the closest emergency unit in proximity to the scene. VFR is committed to getting help to your location as fast as possible. To achieve this VFR firefighters are trained as Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics. Depending on the severity, medical emergencies can require three to six providers to initiate life-saving pre-hospital care. Sending the closest VFR unit provides the best patient outcome, especially during a cardiac or respiratory arrest.

FAQ continued on page 14



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FAQ continued from page 13

Can VFR provide ambulance transport?

In order for VFR to provide EMS services including ambulance transport, VFR would need a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (COPCN) which would require approval from the Sumter County Board of County Commissioners.

Where can I learn more about The Villages Fire Rescue?

Residents and Visitors of The Villages are always invited and encouraged to visit their local Villages fire station. You may also contact The Villages Fire Rescue Administration Offices, Monday thru Friday from 8AM to 5PM by calling (352) 205-8280 or visiting 3035 S. Morse Boulevard during those same hours.

What is the average response time of The Villages Fire Rescue?

For this present fiscal year-to-date, The Villages Fire Rescue has an average travel time of four-minutes and 48 seconds (4:48). This is the time that it takes the fire truck to physically drive to the scene. The Villages Fire Rescue has an average total response time of five-minutes and fifty-three seconds (5:53).

This total response time starts from the second the 9-1-1 dispatcher picks up the phone and ends when the fire truck arrives on scene. **The rapid response time of The Villages Fire Rescue attributes to its 98% save rate of property and contents involved in structure fires, and its cardiac arrest survival rate above the national average.**

FAQ continued on page 15



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## (FAQ)

FAQ continued from page 14

### What can I do to help and show my support of The Villages Fire Rescue?

The Sumter County Board of Commissioners has indicated it will vote on the future of Fire, EMS and Emergency Transport (ambulance) services at its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday September 21 at 7 pm. The meetings are usually held at the Everglades Recreation Center, however, due to the expected size of attendance at this meeting, the POA is calling for the Commissioners to move the meeting to a more appropriate venue, such as the Savannah Center.

The POA has rescheduled its regular General Membership meeting on that same night and is encouraging ALL residents to attend the Commissioners meeting. **This may be your last opportunity to make your voices heard on this critical issue.**

You may also choose to email your opinion to the Commissioners individually at the following addresses.

**Please understand that the Ad Hoc Committee did NOT recommend Option 9 that includes emergency transport services to become part of the VPSD. The POA IS recommending Option 9 as the only viable option to ensure the continued quality of Fire and EMS services and to place emergency transportation in the control of the VPSD, a proven and experienced entity capable of performing this job.**

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gary.search@sumtercountyfl.gov

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Elizabeth Berry Dorsett · 41:58  
Lynnhaven here

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## POA Live Streaming Meetings Big Success!

The POA began livestreaming its monthly membership meetings in July with the presentation by Sumter County Administrator Bradley Arnold. There were approximately 100 people in attendance and another 375 that either watched the meeting live or within a few days. That is a reach of approximately 475 people!

The numbers were nearly double that for the August meeting when Chief Edmund Cain and District Manager Richard Baier made the presentation and answered questions about the Sumter County Commissioners upcoming decision about the future of Fire, EMS, and Emergency Transportation Services. Again, there were approximately 100 people who attended the meeting at Everglades Recreation Center and another 648 have viewed the video. That is 748 people who have more information about a critical issue that will affect their lives in The Villages.

Earlier this year at the beginning of the budget process, the POA proposed that the District explore live streaming the Community Development Boards of Supervisors, the Project Wide Advisory Committee, and the Amenity

Authority Committee. The District put together some numbers, and the idea was dismissed as either “too pricey” or not needed since there isn’t a large attendance at meetings.

There are an infinite number of examples of how access to live streamed meetings would help inform residents and give them access to information without having to attend a meeting. This is THE VILLAGES. It is supposed to be world class and residents are busy enjoying amenities and tending to health and other concerns. They should not have to go to a meeting for access to their local government.

**The POA once again urges the District and all boards and committees to re-examine their lackluster response to live streaming and get it in the upcoming fiscal year budget!** ■

**Stay Connected for the latest Announcements and to watch Membership meetings livestreamed!**



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Now, POA members have easier access to their membership records, submit questions, and stop/start Bulletin delivery including signing up for e-delivery.

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1. Eisenhower Recreation Center  
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2. Chula Vista Recreation Center  
3 pm - 5:30 pm • 1st & 3rd Fridays.
3. Lake Miona Recreation Center  
9 am - 11:30 am • 2nd & 4th Tuesdays.
4. Lady Lake Library  
2 pm - 3:30 pm • 2nd & 4th Wednesdays.

Also, “Understanding Medicare,” a group presentation geared toward those turning 65, will be made at 1 pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, at the Manatee Recreation Center.

For more information, call 800-963-5337. ■



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# Crotons and Cordylines

## THE FANATICAL GARDENER

by Anne Lambrecht Fanatical Gardener

**Crotons** are the most popular of Florida’s colorful foliage plants. They are known for their bold, tropical brilliantly colored leaves shot with gold, red, orange, green and even pink with their colors spreading over the entire leaf. They are native to India and Malaysia.

Crotons are perennial evergreen shrubs in the Euphorbia family which means they have sticky white sap that some may be sensitive to.

Most of us have at least one. They are sold everywhere and are popular in the fall months combined with chrysanthemums and fall grasses. Oh, but they look really pretty in the summer, too.

Croton plants prefer full sun, but not full blazing hot sun and depending on the species, some can tolerate partial shade. The amount of sun that the plant receives will correlate to the intensity of its color. In order to attain full, vibrant color, the plant should remain in good light. Not only can these plants be grown outdoors in North

Central Florida, but some cultivars can be raised as decorative houseplants as long as the light is sufficient. Frosts or freezes will always damage them, but they quickly recover.

If grown in containers, use a good quality potting soil that provides adequate water drainage. When used in landscapes, plants should be located 2 to 3 feet apart. Crotons thrive in warm, humid weather and should be watered frequently, but not excessively. New foliage will wilt when thirsty and can be used as a watering guide.

Crotons are usually pest and disease free, but can occasionally have mealybugs, scales, mites, thrips, and fungal problems. Fanatical Gardener has never seen an insect or fungus on her crotons.

The best fertilizer for crotons is a low-nitrogen, time-released, granular fertilizer. You should sprinkle the fertilizer around the base of the plant in early spring just as the weather starts to warm up.

There are so many cultivars of crotons. Some

include Mammy, Gold Dust, Eleanor Roosevelt, Corkscrew, Picasso’s Paint Brush, Magnificent, Zanzibar and Mother and Daughter.

**Cordyline**, or Ti plant, is a genus of about 15 species of woody flowering plants in the Asparagaceae family and is native to southeast Asia, eastern Australia, Hawaii, and other Pacific islands. Cordyline plants are super tropical (zones 9B, 10 and 11) and suffer greatly here if we have a spout of cold weather. You’ll find them in most nurseries often mislabeled as dracena. But they make excellent houseplants.

Cordyline grows spear-shaped leaves in a variety of colors: green, red, yellow, white, purple, or purplish red. Some varieties of the cordyline plant bloom white, pink, or lavender flowers with berries in the early summer.

Cordyline is toxic to animals. If you have a house cat or a dog (or grandchildren that like to chew on plants), cordyline is not a good choice for you.

Whether you’re planting cordyline outdoors or planting inside, the sun is the first consideration. The outdoor cordyline plant needs full sun while the indoor cordyline varieties need a bright spot, but not direct sunlight.

Cordyline can survive with dry soil if necessary. However, moist soil that drains well is the most ideal. Regular watering is key. Alternately, if your cordyline is a houseplant, then you need to let the soil drain.

You should be able to find several varieties of cordyline at our local nurseries with the ‘Red Sister’ variety being the most common. It has bright, fuchsia-colored new growth, while the older leaves are deeper reddish green. Cordyline australis is one of the species you’ll most often see in cultivation. It resembles yucca and has long, dark, narrow leaves. Cordyline fruticosa includes the ‘Soledad Purple’ cultivar which has striking, large green leaves. The younger leaves are tinted with purple, and the flowers are light purple.

Can you believe the Fanatical Gardener has no cordylines? I must get one!

Source for unusual crotons and cordylines: Peters Crotons & Cordylines Ft. Pierce, FL 772.240.2811 Many varieties of crotons and cordylines, specialty fertilizer and more. [peterscrotonnursery.com](http://peterscrotonnursery.com) <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/FP/FP14100.pdf> ■

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# Looking for More Ways to Connect and Stay Involved?

## THE POA IS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS!

The POA Board is a small group of volunteer leaders who spend a great deal of time working on behalf of the residential property owners in The Villages. We need a few more volunteers who can commit to a leadership role in the following areas.

- **IT/Website Management** – We are looking for someone with strong computer and IT skills to manage our Help Desk for members. This involves creating a team of volunteers who can be trained to resolve member login issues, correct email and mailing addresses, resolve issues with POA Bulletin delivery, etc.
- **Video Camera Operation** – Enjoy shooting video? The POA is seeking someone to operate our MEVO camera system at General Membership meetings and other POA events. Our immediate goal is to post our meeting online. Our long-term goal is to Live Stream our meetings!
- **Membership Management and Analysis** – Our membership is growing! We need someone to put together a membership team who can assist at our membership meetings and occasionally help with mailings.

Please go to our website [POA4US.org](http://POA4US.org) and click on ‘Volunteering’ for an application. ■



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## SENIORS VS CRIME

# Online Shopping Scams

COVID opened the door for scammers to double down on their worst practices, while preying on consumers during an unprecedented global pandemic. That includes some bad actors who have been taking advantage of online shoppers in search of hard-to-find items like face masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE).

According to Cindy Tessler of the Division of Consumer and Business Education at the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), on June 30, 2021, the Federal Trade Commission filed a complaint against one of those bad actors. The Commission alleged that Frank Romero (doing business as Trend Deploy) failed to deliver advertised PPE on time - if at all. What’s more, Romero didn’t tell customers about shipping delays, offer order cancellations, or give refunds. And even worse, although consumers thought Romero was selling them N95 masks, in reality Romero sent them cloth masks that did not have the protective qualities he promised.

When you shop online, sellers are supposed to ship your order within the time stated in their ads or within 30 days if the ads don’t give a time. If a seller can’t ship within the promised time, it has to give you a revised shipping date, with the chance to either cancel your order for a full refund or accept the new shipping date.

So before you shop online, especially from an unfamiliar retailer, remember these three things:

- Check out the company or product. Search online for the name plus terms like “review,” “complaint,” or “scam.” See what other people say about it. Read the seller’s description of the product carefully. If the seller has name-brand goods at steeply discounted prices, they might be fakes.
- Look at the terms of the sale. Make note of the total price, including taxes, shipping, and handling; the expected delivery date; and policies for refunds, including who pays for return shipping and if there is a restocking fee.
- Pay by credit card. You’ll get protections under federal law, so you don’t have to pay for things you ordered but didn’t get.

Remember, if you see a scam, or want to report a problem about online shopping, tell the FTC at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**. If you need assistance with understanding any aspects of Online Shopping Scams, contact the nearest Seniors Vs. Crime office in The Villages for advice or assistance.

Seniors Vs. Crime also has a Speakers Bureau that will gladly come to your club, church, or group to speak about scams. To schedule a presentation, contact any of the offices. There is never a charge for their services. Seniors Vs. Crime can be reached at:

The Fruitland Park Police Department Annex in the Moyer Recreation Center in The Villages (352) 674-1882

The Marion County Sheriff’s Office in The Villages (352) 753-7775

The Sumter County Sheriff’s Office in The Villages (352) 689-4600, Extension 4606

The Wildwood Police Department Annex at Brownwood in The Villages – (352) 753-0727

You can also file online, or by calling 1-800-203-3099. Our staff will call you back and you can file your complaint over the phone.

Volunteers’ at all four offices are ready, willing and able to assist you. To keep up with the latest scams, LIKE ‘Seniors vs. Crime Region 4’ on Facebook. Hablamos Español. Por favor pregunte por Yolanda. Martes a Viernes: 10:00 A.M. a 2:00 P.M., (352) 689-4606. ■

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Another benefit for POA members is this Discount Partner program.

Most vendors will ask you for your current POA Membership card to receive the offered discount. If you have a favorite business who is currently not offering a POA Discount, tell them about our program. Please say "thanks" to our Discount Partners for their participation.



The up-to-date list of Discount Partners can always be found on our website [poa4us.org](http://poa4us.org). Click 'Discount Partners' on the left menu.



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Irv Yedwab
- 2012 Joe Gorman
- 2011 Pete Cacioppo  
Betty Cunningham
- 2009 Dorothy Morehouse-Beeney  
Vinnie Palmisano
- 2008 Ray and Lori Micucci  
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- 2007 Rose Harvey  
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Go to [POA4US.org](http://POA4US.org). If you are a POA member, sign into your account to change your Bulletin Delivery preference. If you are not a member, create a Guest Account by selecting POA Bulletin Delivery.



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