

Trent Swartz

From: Hutcherson, Karen <KHutcherson@leegov.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 15, 2018 9:59 AM
To: Interested Parties
Subject: LEE COUNTY PERMITTING UPDATE/NEW LOBBY HOURS

Dear Customers-

The time it is taking to get through the permitting, plan review and building inspection processes has gone up the last few months, causing a significant amount of frustration. The biggest reason is the combined level of permit/plan review/inspection activities being up 67% for April-July of this year compared to those same months last year, which has stressed our staffing levels. Besides a general increase in construction activity, there have also been spikes related to Hurricane Irma repairs, building code changes, and impact fee increases. On top of this increased activity level, we upgraded our permitting software in June, which has had some transitional challenges that have contributed to the delays and frustration.

Operational Adjustments/NEW LOBBY HOURS

To try and reduce permitting and inspection times, the County has taken a multi-pronged approach. The Board of County Commissioners in June approved eight new positions within the Community Development Department and we have been working to fill all our available vacancies (some of which require special state licensing). We've also been shifting personnel within the department to the areas of greatest need and will be moving forward with an internal reorganization, have staff working lots of overtime, and are utilizing outside contractors to supplement our staffing.

Two additional steps we will be taking are intended to improve the efficiency of the review and processing of permit requests. The first will be adding some frequently-omitted items to a checklist on the permit application, with a review and potential rejection at the counter if the application is not complete. The second is to change our lobby hours in order to allow staff time to deal with the behind-the-counter processing activities, things like scanning paper submittals and responding to phone calls and electronic submittals.

**Effective Monday, August 27th the new lobby hours will be:
Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Last sign in for the day will be at 3:45 p.m.**

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, and urge our customers to consider electronic submittals to avoid lobby delays or conflicts. [You can get additional information on our eServices here.](#)

Software Issues

We continue to work with our contractor and with the county's IT staff to address issues related to the roll-out of our new permitting solution (Accela has replaced Tidemark). The system has stabilized and we are seeing improvement every day. We continue to hold daily progress meetings to address operational priorities. We are also working on:

- Updating the version of ProjectDox/ePlan to resolve conflicts between the older version and Accela which will improve document uploading.
- Updating Crystal Reports to improve receipt processing.

We will let you know once these upgrades have been completed.

Assistance Available

If you need assistance with the new system, you can come to our lobby where we have computers available and staff to provide direction, or you can e-mail us at econnect@leegov.com or call at 239-533-8300. If you have a problem with a

particular permit in the system, you can contact our Permitting Chief Jennifer Harden at 239-533-8337 or Senior Customer Service Specialist Sharon Calderwood at 239-533-8338.

Thank you again for your patience. We will continue to work to make our permitting process as smooth and timely as possible.

Sincerely,
David Loveland
Director, Lee County Department of Community Development

Please note: Florida has a very broad public records law. Most written communications to or from County Employees and officials regarding County business are public records available to the public and media upon request. Your email communication may be subject to public disclosure.

Under Florida law, email addresses are public records. If you do not want your email address released in response to a public records request, do not send electronic mail to this entity. Instead, contact this office by phone or in writing.