

City of Sanibel, Florida  
Building Department Narrative

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**Department:** Building  
**Fund:** Special Revenue Fund

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**Mission Statement:** To build a safe, sustainable and resilient community, consistent with the Sanibel Plan, through the enforcement of all Building Codes.

**Challenges Facing the Department:**

The Building Department is always challenged with improvement to service. Our major area of improvement is in file access by computer. We are heavily tied with MIS in meeting our goal for 2009. The upgrades to the cities system are scheduled and when this is completed our public friendly access challenge will be minimized.

**Emerging Issues:**

- A concerted effort is needed to inform the citizens through awareness and education on hiring properly licensed contractors. By the proper use of licensing they can be protected from dangerous and unsafe non-code compliant situations on their property; keeping owners from exposure to large injury liability suits through the use of licensed contractors are two major components for citizens.
- Keeping cost down for the department in order to provide quality service at a reasonable rate.
- New Requirements: In 2009 the New National Electrical Code goes into effect. The Building Department and the construction industry will have to be knowledgeable of all code changes.
- Education on Codes, Administration and Legal aspects are needed to maintain the high standard the City has become accustomed to from the Building Department.

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**2009-2010 Goals and Objectives:**

<b>Building Department</b>	<b>Estimated Start</b>	<b>Estimated Completion</b>
As part of Vision Goal #4 (Strengthen the Economic Health & vitality of the City)		
Maintaining a Class 5 in the Community Rating System by National Flood Insurance Program will insure property owners a 25% discount in the rate for flood insurance.		
Completing the annual reviews by NFIP	October, 2009	April, 2010

<b>Building Department</b>	<b>Estimated Start</b>	<b>Estimated Completion</b>
As part of Vision Goal # Water Quality: Increased monitoring of all known properties not connected to the sewer & requiring connecting with permits requested for those properties.		
Review all properties at the end of each quarter for connections		

**Operational Responsibilities:**

In the Building Department there are three major functions; pre-construction, construction and licensing.

- **Pre-Construction** – Prior to commencement of construction, the Building Department must confirm that all city requirements have been met. The plans for construction must be reviewed to comply with the standards of the family of Florida Codes, (Building, Electric, Mechanical, Plumbing and Fuel gas) along with compliance of Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Federal Emergency Management Agencies as well as the National Flood Insurance Program.
- **Construction** - During the active construction phase the Building Department is responsible for receiving requests for inspections, distributing printed requests to proper departments for all departmental inspections within the city involved in construction; as well as the building inspectors in the Building Department. The inspectors are then charged with completing necessary inspections, notifying the permit holder of any inadequacies found on the job site during everyday inspection requests. At the close of the project, the Building Department is responsible for checking that all other city department requirements have been satisfied, before we issue a Certificate of Occupancy or Completion.
- **Licensing** – Since it's inception in 2005, the Contractor Review Board has issued 381 contractor licenses to date, and continues to issue more every month. The Board, reviews cases, along with hearing complaints. The Board may then make recommendations to the Department of Business and Professional Regulations for penalties on State Certified Contractors or impose fines or penalties for locally licensed individuals, as well as suspension of permitting privileges.

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**BUILDING OFFICIAL:**

The Department consists of the Building Official, Deputy Building Official, Permit Technician and Licensing & Permit Technician. The Building Official is responsible for all pre-construction and construction phases including licensing.

The Building Official oversees all functions of the department and works under the direct supervision of the City Manager. The responsibilities of Building Department staff are outlined below.

**DEPUTY BUILDING OFFICIAL:**

- Reviews all plans for code compliance.
- Determines when plans need additional reviews from Sanibel Fire, Building Official, etc.
- Reviews complete applications ensuring compliance with Natural Resources, Public Works (erosion control), Sanibel Fire, permission from the City Manager to issue revocable license to obstruct public right-of-way or canal.
- Maintains files on all Mastered Engineering for Contractor files.
- Notifies via mail, fax or phone results of plan review.
- Enters review dates and times into HTE.
- Answers code questions from general public, contractors, architects and engineers.
- Assists with inspections.
- Assumes role of Building Official when necessary.
- Organizes route in morning depending on type, priority and location.
- Ensures all structures built are to the FBC and EL Codes.
- Communicates with contractors and sub-contractors daily while in the field.
- Works closely with Sanibel Fire for related inspections.
- Checks that all erosion control devices are maintained throughout the permit process.
- Checks for invasive, non-native vegetation at job sites.
- Communicates inspection denials via fax, phone or correct work order.
- Checks that all contractors are licensed and properly permitted.
- Reviews plans for necessary code enforcement issues at C.O. (final survey, vegetation, public works, etc.)
- Works directly with Sanibel Fire, LCEC, and Utilities.
- Re-files all plans at days end and pulls files for the next day's route.

**PERMIT TECHNICIAN: (full time front counter)**

- Schedules inspections, prints tickets, reviews, readies documents for route.
- Coordinates inspections for public works, Sanibel Fire, and Vegetation.
- Input inspection results into computer.

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- Answers phone calls, directs to appropriate person, notarizes as needed. Greets all customers at counter.
- Monthly Building Reports
- Coordinates final site survey and elevation certificates
- Process all permits, checks for completion of necessary paperwork, including correct owner in HTE, contractor licensing, notifies when ready.
- Pulling files and channels paperwork to planning for pending CO.
- Keeps list of all vegetation and mangrove classroom attendees.
- Orders and handles off site record retrieval.
- Assists public for information/clarification.
- Backs up licensing coordinator when needed.
- Ensures all forms are ready for the public.
- Office filing and input Notice of Commencements into HTE.
- Assists with mailings.
- Notarizes documents for public.

**LICENSING AND PERMIT TECHNICIAN:**

- Reviews all contractor license applications for review by the Building Official and the Contractor Review Board.
- Prepares for Contractor Review Board, including agenda and minutes.
- Maintains all contractor files, including vegetation and mangrove.
- Coordinate sponsor site for all contractor testing.
- Updates Building Dept. forms, licensing forms, and the website information & forms.
- Stays current on all applicable insurance and workman's compensation laws.
- Deciphers classification of contractors and works with applicant until Board decision.
- Logs complaints on contractors, compiles and tracks until decision by CRB. Files complaints with DBPR at the request of CRB
- Works closely with Building Official, City Attorney and CRB.
- Assists other staff as needed for special projects & mailings.
- Assists public with information, serves as back up to Permit Technician, phone and counter.
- Orders and handles off-site record retrieval and opens mail.
- Backs up front permit technician with issuance of building permits, prints license reports as needed, downloads inspections from recorder, puts in results of same.
- Notarizes documents for public.
- Ensures all forms are ready for the public.
- Office filing and input Notice of Commencements into HTE.
- Yearly Budget Report
- Keeps list of all vegetation and mangrove classroom attendees
- Structural Safety Inspectors and annual meeting

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**2008-2009 Goals and Status:**

Goal	Status
1. To review, purchase and update software that will fully serve the office and its' heavy demand for a newer, more fully diversified functionality for: Inspections, Permitting and Licensing.	This will reduce the need for additional personnel and increase service.
2. To maintain a class 5 with FEMA, through the NFIP.	FEMA/NFIP Class 5 - Annual reports are given with supporting documentation. Every third year FEMA sends the ISO to do a complete audit of our Community Rating System program.
3. To maintain a balance of permit fees received and the associated costs of enforcing the Florida Building Code.	Our projected revenues offset our permit fees. Our expenditures are less than the years' percentage so far.

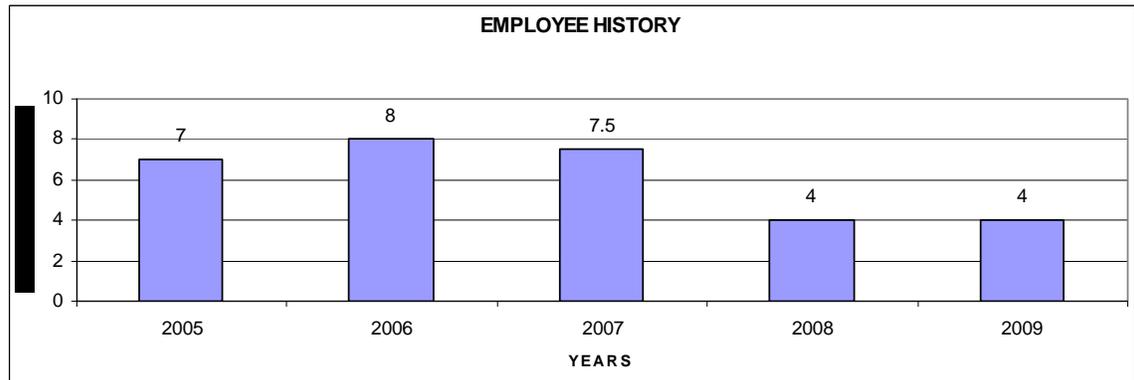
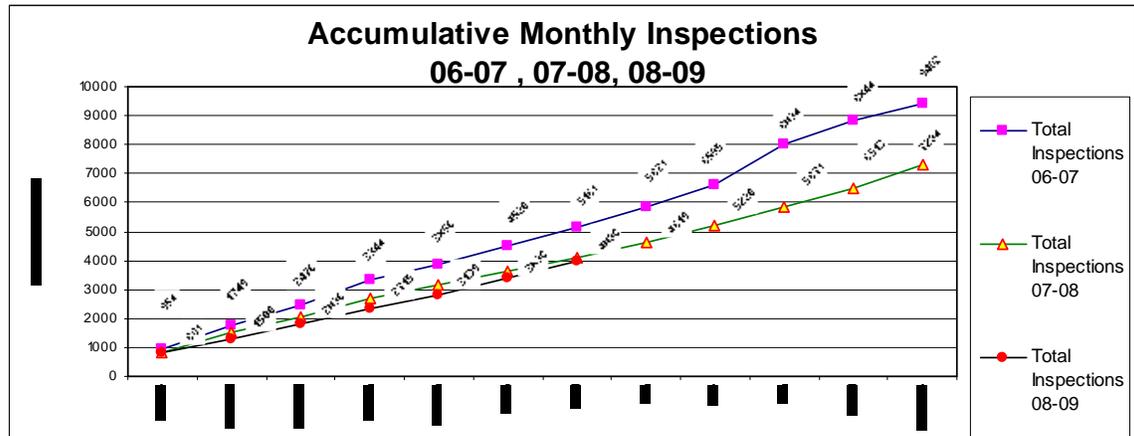
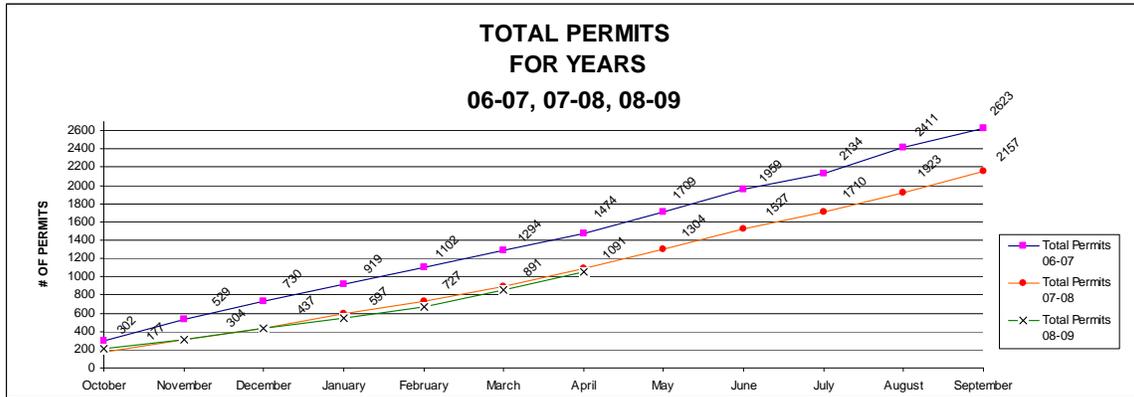
**FY 2008 Accomplishments**

- The Building Department has been closely in touch with the economic climate on Sanibel and has made budget and staff adjustments to reflect climate.
- The department has continued to improve service to the contractors and the community in the rebuilding of the structures affected from two past storms.
- We have finished our annual review with FEMA and NFIP, Community Rating System, maintaining a 5 rating which produces a 25% reduction for all property owners on Sanibel.
- The department has implemented the changes to the Florida Building Code and has worked to educate contractors as to these changes.
- The department has shipped and maintains all inactive permit files off island.
- The department has worked to build a strong, cohesive unit of highly trained professionals who are posed to address future events and concerns cased by the economy of the City.
- The staff has worked to develop and compile all applying contractor application files prior to a CRB meeting.
- The staff has worked with citizens on resolving or carrying complaints on licensed contractors to the CRB.

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## Trend Analysis:

As the construction industry slows down, to a normal pace, the same number of contractors are competing for less work and as a result, we are working with all owner complaints to reduce opportunities before they become major problems.



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As can be seen from the total permits chart for the last 3 full years and the number of permits issued to date this year the volume of permits have decreased.

Looking at the Employee History Chart, it shows we have decreased staff by half of the employee's since 2006.

The inspections requested chart does show a slow down in requests which is requiring existing staff to work beyond capacity and will need to be addressed in the near future.

**Recommended Efficiencies:**

**As noted in our challenges above, the efficiencies will also be realized with the program upgrades. With the upgrades, inspections, permits and application tracking will be greatly improved.**

**Potential Revenue Sources:**

**We believe that at this time we are using all sources. The only way to maintain our revenues is through educating the public of the high importance to life and safety when permits are used on their property.**

**Suggestions on How to Better Serve the Community:**

**Upgrading the HTE program will improve public access to information that they greatly need in order to help in their everyday business. These upgrades are scheduled in 2009.**