

September 2022 Activity Report

I wish I could say this was a quiet month as elected officials celebrated their primary wins and began to refocus their attention on the general election. However, Hurricane Ian suddenly changed that dynamic in the blink of an eye. A storm we were all watching closely as its path changed from Tampa to Tallahassee, back to Tampa, and then ultimately to Caya Costa in Lee County. They were leaving untold devastation and resulting in the death of 94 Floridians. Hurricane Ian shared the same path as Charley from 2004 but covered an area of four hundred miles with max winds of 155 mph, two miles shy of being a category-five hurricane. The devastation will be felt for years to come, but through these tragedies, we see the true humanity of people and our elected come out as neighboring states helped to stagger 43,000 linemen to restore power. Two to this date, five counties still have schools closed indefinitely. Sarasota county will finally reopen its schools this coming Monday, with Collier County reopening last Wednesday.

Florida Disaster Relief Fund

First Lady Casey DeSantis announced that the Florida Disaster Fund had raised over \$26 million since activation. To read more info, click [here](#). To contribute, please visit www.FloridaDisasterFund.org or text DISASTER to 20222. Additionally, the First Lady has worked with the State Disaster Recovery Mental Health Coordinator Sara Newhouse to compile a webpage of resources to help first responders navigate resources for mental health needs post-hurricane. To visit the site, click [here](#).

Mental health resources for individuals and communities are available at [MyFLFamilies.com/Hurricane Ian](http://MyFLFamilies.com/HurricaneIan). Floridians' health and well-being are a top priority, and the Department of Children and Families reminds individuals that they are not alone. All Floridians impacted by Hurricane Ian can find someone to talk to today through the **Disaster Distress Helpline** by calling 800-985-5990.

Safe and found persons can be reported safe at <http://safe.fl.gov>.

Below is a list of resources for those in need and those who wish to support the response and recovery efforts.

Resources:

- FloridaDisaster.org is the best place to find all Hurricane-related updates and resources.
- FEMA's Hurricane Ian [disaster declaration webpage](#) includes support for families and businesses, and they have activated [individual assistance](#) for Floridians who need recovery aid.
- The state has launched an [Emergency Service Request](#) form to locate and rescue survivors and missing people.
- Florida DBPR is extending certain license renewal and tax filing deadlines through the end of October. [DBPR Emergency Order](#)
- [Feeding Tampa Bay](#) is hosting a mega pantry today, 9/30, from 11:30 am-2:00 pm at HCC Dale Mabry Campus.
- ['After Hurricane Ian, how to get help with fallen trees, food, and damaged shelters'](#) – article by the Tampa Bay Times

Here are some ways to help:

The [Florida Disaster Fund](#) has been set up to assist with response and recovery efforts. Governor DeSantis calls for donations to the Florida Disaster Fund, the official fund to help with response and recovery efforts. The fund is operated through Volunteer Florida, a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization; donations are tax-deductible.

[Volunteer Florida](#) – The state is calling for volunteers to help with response efforts, with a particular need for mental health support services.

United Way Suncoast has launched a [Disaster Recovery Services](#) resource page and is accepting donations for their [Disaster Recovery Fund](#) to help meet storm-related needs and support long-term recovery in their region of Hillsborough, Pinellas, Manatee, Sarasota, and DeSoto. [United Way of Florida](#) also has a Disaster Recovery Fund for needs across the state.

[Big Storm Brewing](#) is collecting supplies for Charlotte and Lee Counties residents at their Pasco and Clearwater taprooms.

[‘Where to donate or volunteer to help Hurricane Ian victims’ – Tampa Bay Times](#)

President Biden has signed a Major Disaster Declaration that directs FEMA resources to cover response and recovery efforts. Under this declaration, affected individuals in Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Hardee, Hillsborough, Lee, Manatee, Pinellas, and Sarasota counties are eligible to receive federal funding for temporary housing and home repairs and low-interest loans to cover uninsured property losses.

Executive Orders

The Department of Business and Professional Regulation issued Emergency Order 2022-01, extending the license renewal deadline from September 30th or October 1, 2022, to October 31, 2022.

The agency also issued an emergency order allowing Florida Licensed Builders to perform re-roofing of Homes damaged by Hurricane Ian. A copy of the Order can be found [here](#).

Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program

Governor Ron DeSantis expanded the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program to include Brevard County. \$50 million is available through the Emergency Bridge Loan program for businesses impacted by Hurricane Ian. \$10 million is dedicated to small businesses that are agricultural producers. The program is available to companies in Brevard, Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Flagler, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lake, Lee, Manatee, Monroe, Orange, Osceola, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, and Volusia counties. Small businesses in the most impacted counties — Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Hardee, Lee, and Sarasota — will be escalated and prioritized as they are received.

The program, administered by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), provides short-term, zero-interest loans to small businesses that experienced economic injury or physical damage due to Hurricane Ian. Interested applicants can apply through December 2, 2022, or until all available funds are expended. Loans approved through the Emergency Bridge Loan Program are intended to “bridge the gap” between when a disaster impacts a business and when a company has secured longer-term recovery funding such as federally or commercially available loans, insurance claims, or other resources. Eligible small businesses may apply for loans of up to \$50,000 through the program.

Loans made under this program are short-term, zero-interest, personal loans using State of Florida funds. They are not grants, and the approved applicant must repay loans. DEO administers the Emergency Bridge Loan Program alongside its fiscal administrator, Florida First Capital Finance Corporation.

Visit www.FloridaJobs.org/EBL to learn more about the program, as well as to view the lending guidelines and required documentation and to complete an application by the December 2, 2022, deadline. Business owners who need further program information may call 833-832-4494 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Eastern Time.

This will be a significant issue for lawmakers to look at next Session and a Special Session. As Florida’s insurance industry hangs by a thread, additional measures will be needed as another couple of companies have been declared insolvent.

Elections

Even though Ian has caused most things to halt, the race to November is still well underway. The General Election will be held on November 8th. Eligible individuals can register to vote at any time. The deadline to register to participate in an upcoming election is 29 days before the election. The registration deadlines for 2022 are:

- General Election: October 11

The deadline to request that a vote-by-mail ballot be **mailed** is no later than 5:00 p.m. (local time) on the 10th day before the election. A vote-by-mail ballot must be **returned and received** by the Supervisor of Elections in the county of registration no later than 7:00 p.m. (local time) on election day for the respective election to be counted.

By law, early voting must be held for at least eight days. Each county Supervisor of Elections may offer more days of early voting from one or more of the following days:

- Primary Election: August 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 21
- General Election: October 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and November 6

Still, the key races that will be watching are:

Governor – New polling shows Governor DeSantis with a 7-point lead 7-pointer Congressman Charlie Crist. Both have postponed their debate and are not expected to be rescheduled.

US Senate – Val Demings won and will Face Marco Rubio. Depending on the poll you read, either Demings is ahead, they are tied, or Rubio is in the lead. Currently, the RCP average has Rubio at 47% and Deming at 43%.

Congress

- District 13 – Anna Paulina Luna vs. Eric Lynn. Luna is expected to win as the district leans Republican now after redistricting.
- District 15 - Laurel Lee vs. face Alan Cohn. Laurel Lee is expected to win this seat as the district favors Republicans.

State Senate

There are five battleground races this cycle. Three are republican, and two are democratic. All forty members are up for reelection. Heading into the 2022 election, the Republican Party controls twenty-three seats, and the Democratic Party holds sixteen seats with one vacancy. Some of the critical Races are:

- District 14 Sen. Janet Cruz vs. Republican Jay Collins
 - As Incoming Senate President Kathleen Passidomo aims for a goal of 28 Republicans in the Florida Senate. The path to that victory cannot occur without this crucial race. Sen. Janet Cruz's long-time democratic incumbent will face Green Beret Jay Collins. If you recall, Jay initially filed for CD 15 but moved to the Florida Senate to take on Janet Cruz. The district leans Democratic, but many Florida pollsters say this is a jump ball, as it all comes down to independents and how they split.
- Corey Simon vs. Lorraine Ausley
 - State Senator Lorraine Ausley, a Democrat, is defending her seat from challenger Corey Simon, a Republican. Ausley is an attorney known for her advocacy for children, public employees, and people with disabilities. Simon is a former Florida State University and NFL football player who was CEO of Volunteer Florida. Ausley is an attorney known for her advocacy for children, public employees, and people with disabilities. Simon is a former Florida State University and NFL football player who was CEO of Volunteer Florida.
- Janelle Perez vs. Alexis Calatayud
 - Perez, a businessperson who would be the first openly gay woman elected to the Senate. Perez is competing to represent Miami-Dade's Senate District 38 against Alexis Calatayud, who, like Perez, is a first-time candidate. The Republican, who served in the state Department of Education, drew the endorsement of outgoing Senate President Wilton Simpson, Senate President Kathleen Passidomo, and Sen. Ben Albritton hours after she filed to run for the seat. The district, which covers several

coastal Miami-Dade municipalities, voted for Biden by seven percentage points, according to elections data from MCI Maps.

- Jason Brodeur vs. Joy Goff-Marcil
 - Rep. Joy Goff-Marcil will run for the Florida Senate this year. That sets up one of the most significant legislative races this cycle as the Maitland Democrat seeks to unseat Republican Sen. Jason Brodeur. Comparatively, Biden also won SD 9 in 2020, the same night Brodeur won. But it was much closer, with Biden taking 49.36% of the vote to Trump's 49.24%.

State House

The Florida House also seeks to secure 81 Republicans of the 120 to have supermajority control. Two of the key races are located within Tampa Bay. They are:

- District 65 – Karen Pittman vs. Democrat Jen McDonald. Critical race Florida Republican House lawmakers hope to keep republican, but the district is purple now and has been trending bluer over the past years.
- District 69 – Republican Danny Alvarez vs. Rep. Andrew Learned in general. This is another crucial race to critical as republican House leadership hopes to flip it to help increase their majority to eighty-one. As they pursue a supermajority.

Local Projects in Limbo After Deadline Passes for Gov to Release Money

Gov. Ron DeSantis did not submit a required budget amendment by the deadline to distribute \$175 million to agencies for local projects around the state. The spending was approved last month by the Legislative Budget Commission and is earmarked for 238 local projects that were not included in the final 2022-23 state budget. DeSantis had to submit a budget amendment [by Sept. 30](#) to release the money. Still, the deadline came and went with no budget amendment from the governor, putting a hold on the distribution of the funds. The governor's office has not commented on the reason for the decision not to submit the amendment, though the deadline came during a state of emergency for Hurricane Ian. The money now returns to state accounts. The Legislative Budget Commission is expected to [meet again next week](#) to approve another lump sum worth \$360 million to help the state recover from Ian.

Flagler County inmates graduate first Pre-HVAC class.

Earlier this month, those inmates received their Pre-HVAC (Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning) apprenticeship certificates through Flagler Technical College (FTC), a partnership program launched earlier this year by Flagler County Sheriff Rick Staly under the Homeward Bound Initiative (HBI).

Proposed Rules

Department: Department of Business and Professional Regulation

Division: Florida Building Commission

Rule No.: 61G20-1.001

Purpose: Senate Bill 4-D (2022) was passed by the Legislature during a particular session and went into effect upon being signed by the Governor. The bill contains a provision that expands repair options for existing roofs built, repaired, or replaced to the standards of the 2007 Florida Building Code or any later edition and directs the Florida Building Commission to adopt this provision into the Code. The bill also contains provisions concerning mandatory structural inspections for condominium and cooperative buildings, and the Commission intends to incorporate these into the Code.

https://www.flrules.org/gateway/View_Notice.asp?id=26352395

Notice of Declaratory Statement

Department: Department of Business and Professional Regulation

Division: Construction Industry Licensing Board

Petitioner: All Clean Carpet & Upholstery, filed on September 12, 2022.

Full Text: Although Petitioner did not identify a rule or statute, the Petitioner asks the Board, "If conducting the air duct cleaning service in such a way that only requires attaching to a particular vent and allowing the machine to run, we would assume this to mean that a license is not needed?"

Petitioner also asks the Board, "Is it the position of the DBPR that "partial disassembly of the system" would also involve the unscrewing of two screws on a vent cover?" "If that unscrewing of a vent cover happened before our arrival, would that also require a license, or would it fall under the "Does Not Need a DBPR License" category?" Except for a good cause shown, motions for leave to intervene must be filed within 21 days after publication of this notice.

https://www.flrules.org/gateway/View_Notice.asp?id=26327369

Regulators Considering Workers Comp Rate Reduction

State Insurance Commissioner David Altmaier said he would consider the 8.4% reduction on new and renewed workers' compensation policies recommended by the National Council on Compensation Insurance. The licensed rating agency assessed data from 2019 and 2020 to guide the new lower rate on behalf of workers' compensation insurance companies. In a report submitted to the state, the national insurance organization found a consistent decline in wage replacement claims from injured employees seeking workers' compensation benefits. Florida's roofing industry is backing the new rate reduction, citing a fear that rates will increase in the future due to the "Great Resignation" and an uptick in less-experienced roofers, accompanied by an increase in demand for housing and construction, plus rising medical costs and a tight reinsurance market. "Due to all of this, we are here today because of the uncertainty of the insurance market; we are asking for the consideration to freeze the current (roofers') rate class code," said President of Florida Roofing and Sheet Metal Association Matthew Criswell. Altmaier did not definitively say whether the rate will be frozen or reduced but did say he will consider public comment on the issue until Oct. 7 while his actuaries continue to review the report. If Altmaier

approves NCCI's recommended 8.4% reduction effective January 2023, workers' compensation rates in Florida will have decreased by 74% over 20 years. [Florida Politics](#) / [NCCI Testimony](#)

Florida has \$21M to help victims of contractor scams. Few local victims will benefit.

The Florida Homeowners' Contractor Recovery Fund seemed like a potential lifeline for area residents who allege they have been defrauded out of thousands of dollars by former Pensacola contractor Matt Banks. Banks revoked his license in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties in August following numerous complaints from clients who say they paid the contractor thousands of dollars, sometimes tens of thousands of dollars, for remodel projects he never completed. Banks filed for bankruptcy in August, creating doubt that he would ever return clients' money, but the recovery fund was billed as a safety net to help citizens in situations like these.

The following events took place in September 2022.

Date	Name	Purpose	Follow Up
9/8	FSA Officer Monthly call with RSA		
9/9	Trina Kramer, House Judiciary	Introductory	
9/9	Booter Imhof, Staff Director, Senate Reg. Industries	Introductory	
9/13	Sen. Burgess Fundraiser	Introductory	
9/15	Robert Babin, Senate Finance and Tax Staff Director	Introductory	
9/15	Tom Cibula, Senate Judiciary Staff Director	Introductory	

Future Meetings

Date	Name	Purpose
10/4	Kurt Hamon, House Commerce Staff Director	Introductory
10/6	VC Michael Moyer to attend lunch with Danny Alvarez	Introductory
10/13	Senate Committee on Banking and Insurance	Introductory
10/13	FSA Research touch Base	
10/20	FSA Meeting w/ City of Deland	Discuss Bond Form

- Identified contact in Venice, FL, to send a letter.
- Provided information on United Way Florida if FSA does a Charity golf tournament for relief victims
- Participated in an intro call with Michael Moyer and Jared Simon on 8/2
- Scheduling Introductory meetings for the Officer Board with the Office of Insurance Regulation and the Chief Financial Officer's office in Tallahassee.