



FLORIDA COMMUNITIES OF EXCELLENCE
2012 managers of excellence



Steve Anderson of Island Walk of Naples

by Megan McMurry

Steve Anderson was raised in central Minnesota where his father owned an automotive repair business with his father's two brothers. After serving in the United States Navy, Anderson studied accounting and management/finance at St. Cloud State University and eventually moved to Naples in 1981.

He has been in management in several different industries for the majority of the last thirty years—managing carpet and furniture stores, prefabricated truss and wall component plants, condominiums, cooperatives, and HOA's. He also worked in the construction industry in the early '80s as a carpenter.

Anderson recalls his entry into community association management, "After recuperating from a back injury, I began looking around the Naples area and became interested in community association management because I felt I had the necessary skills to work with vendors and property owners."

He began as a maintenance person for a HUD property owned by National Housing Partnership in 1997. He was soon promoted to manager and became licensed by the state of Florida on July 22, 1998. "I began a search for a more challenging position and found one with Stephen E. Williams, owner of Southwest Property Management Corp., in January 1999 where I was assigned a portfolio of 15 properties that totaled over 1,400 units," Anderson tells about his early days in management. "That portfolio included condominium units, cooperative units, several HOAs, a commercial property, and a marina. In January 2002, I began my



current assignment as Town Manager of Island Walk Homeowners Association, Inc., a 1,856-unit property just northeast of Naples."

Island Walk has certainly benefited from Anderson taking over the community. He has led them in an extremely successful direction. This is best pictured in the community's performance in the Communities of Excellence Awards. While only competing for two years, they have been a force to reckon with. In 2011, they were winners in the Family Friendly Initiatives and Trendsetter Award and finalists in Energy and Water Conservation/Sustainable Practices and Financial Innovation. All this led to them being named the 2011 HOA of the Year. In 2012, Island Walk was named a winner in Energy and Water Conservation another Trendsetter Award and a finalist in Financial Innovation.

Anderson notes that the community's success starts with the board of directors. "Island Walk is fortunate to have many talented volunteers who are willing to focus their efforts on projects that benefit the association. I've always tried to integrate their ideas with my background



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and knowledge and come to reasonable solutions. Being excellent includes being frugal and looking outside the box for alternatives and, on occasion, accepting things as they are. I work with a nine-member board, 21 committees, several task forces, and some special interest groups. I think it's important to give assistance and provide professional and historical data to these groups so they can be better prepared to make recommendations or approve and fund recommendations."

Island Walk has updated and improved many areas of the community under the guidance of Anderson. He explains, "Through the years I've been involved in two major contract negotiations and vendor changes for landscape services; several contract negotiations for access control; a major irrigation sprinkler head replacement project; a major renovation to our restaurant; a total renovation of our fitness center; conversion of putting green, bocce courts, and lawn bowling surfaces to artificial turf with major upgrades in drainage; a gatehouse interior renovation; several lease negotiations for our five commercial spaces; renovation of our tennis court irrigation system; several landscape lighting upgrades; and, most recently, added aeration to our 170-acre retention ponds."

"This year we plan to upgrade Bahia grass to Floritam on county right-of-way to improve the appearance of the exterior of the property. There is a major interior renovation of the Towncenter in the planning stages, and exterior painting of the Towncenter is being discussed. The second phase of gatehouse renovation will occur this summer. We are in the discovery stage of determining if an addition to our existing maintenance building would prove beneficial for added storage instead of renting

off-site space. There is some lake bank erosion that needs attention. We continue to explore ideas to cut operating expenses, reduce waste, save energy, and improve our recycling programs. Last year, we underwent a major sidewalk replacement program to remove trip hazards caused by displaced concrete sections. The displacement was caused by tree roots. We removed and replaced 893 sections of sidewalk, repaired displaced pavers in 301 locations, and ground 153 locations to a smooth transition. The total cost of the project was in excess of \$328,000."

With all these projects, Anderson has a wealth of knowledge on what it takes to keep a community running smoothly. "Each project has its own special set of circumstances that must be considered and

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problems that need to be anticipated. I always try to consider what effect a project will have on the residents of the community. To be successful, a project must be described to the community in terms they can relate to, and the negative affects on their lives must be minimal.”

One important aspect of any outsourced project is the bidding process. “I use an RFP for most bids and typically provide three or more bids for board review,” Anderson says about his process. “When a project is approved and funds appropriated, I have a standard contract that is used. This contract has been reviewed by our attorney and approved by the board. All appropriate paperwork is maintained in the office for future reference if necessary.”

Anderson is obviously dedicated to his job, but he is equally dedicated to his family. “I have been married to my wife, Wanda, for 25 years. We have two sons, Steven, who is 21 and a Biology major at the University of Central Florida, and Jason, who is 17 and a senior at Naples High. We have lived in our current residence since 1989. Our family enjoys boating, fishing, and camping. I’ve been a leader in the Boy Scouts of America for 15 years and am the proud father of one Eagle Scout and my son Jason will soon become the second Eagle Scout in our family.”

Anderson’s many accomplishments since assuming the role of manager at Island Walk demonstrates his gift of leadership. That is why he was selected as a 2012 Manager of Excellence. ■



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