

# Outlook

"Your project. Our passion."

## CELEBRATING 45 YEARS OF DEDICATION: HONORING THE CAREER OF ANDY TILTON, PE

*After four decades of unwavering dedication and countless contributions to our company, we bid farewell to Andy Tilton, PE, as he embarks on a well-deserved journey into retirement. With gratitude and heartfelt appreciation, we reflect on Andy's career and the profound impact he has had on our organization.*

Andy's journey with Johnson Engineering actually began more than a half century ago, when he was a young boy working with his father, Walter, who provided carpentry and masonry work for our company founder, Carl E. Johnson. Walter built drafting tables and even developed customized tapered concrete property corner survey markers for the company in the early 1960s. This work fostered a relationship which led to Walter addressing uneven floor settling issues at Carl's home. As a young boy, Andy recalls crawling under the jacked-up home, measuring, and shimming to restore the floor to a level condition.



Andy has been dedicated to the hydrology of Southwest Florida for four decades, recording rain events, tracking rainfall, and even crawling through storm drains to observe and record water flow patterns.

Andy is one of only a handful of Johnson Engineering employees who had the pleasure of knowing Carl. Prior to his passing, Carl sold the company to Archie Grant in the late 1960s.

Andy went on to attend the University of Florida to pursue his Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering in the late 1970s. During his school breaks and summer vacations, Andy worked at Johnson Engineering where he fondly recalls conducting water level recordings along Trout Creek on Babcock Ranch, where ironically, he

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## PEOPLE & PROJECTS: ON THE MOVE



**Greg Byrer, RLA** recently joined our Landscape Architecture team. He brings 36 years' experience in commercial, residential, streetscape, parks & recreation, and land development landscape architecture design.



**Steven Ball, PE** has joined our Land Development team. A Fort Myers native, Steven received his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from FGCU and brings 5 years of SWFL engineering project experience.





would eventually become the District Engineer for the Telegraph Cypress Water Management District in the 1980s. That marked the beginning of decades of Andy's instrumental contributions to the water management and hydrology at Babcock Ranch.

When Andy graduated from UF, he had many offers by other engineering firms, but couldn't pass up the opportunity when then Johnson Engineering President Archie Grant offered him a full-time job. Before diving into the professional realm, Andy negotiated an extended start date to embark on a road trip adventure across the United States. His adventure took five weeks, covered 6,000 miles, and only cost him \$400.

The year was 1978 and the beginning of Andy's 45-year tenure at Johnson Engineering. On Andy's first day, Forrest Banks tasked him with hand coloring elevation contours on a blueprint for what is now McGregor Woods Subdivision. With no specific instructions

Andy began coloring with a red marker for the most prominent elevation. When Forrest returned hours later, to his dismay, he discovered Andy was actually colorblind. This was his first task at overcoming obstacles. Forrest built him a legend and asked him to start again, which he successfully did.

No terrain was too difficult for Andy to conduct his water level recordings.

His job responsibilities had him dabbling in everything from survey curves and tangents calculations to designing residential and commercial development throughout Lee County. Andy developed an interest in sizing pipes and stormwater routing work. Recognizing Andy's passion for this area, Archie offered him the opportunity to work under him, focusing primarily on stormwater-related projects. This marked the beginning of Andy's career path, and the formation of the company's Water Resources group.

In the early 80s Andy would spend hours hand calculating backwater profile calculations, which are the foundational piece of each water management system. Today, these calculations are produced in seconds thanks to modern computer software. As technology evolved, so did Andy's methodologies, which allowed us to tackle complex projects with greater precision and efficiency.

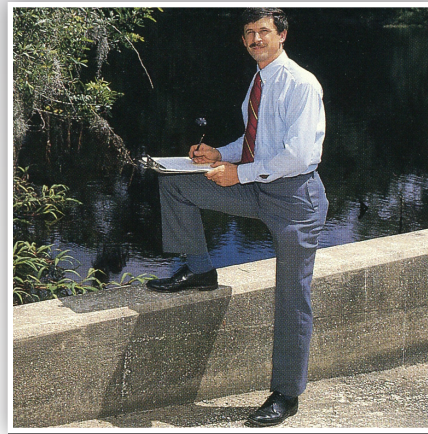
Throughout his career Andy was thoroughly dedicated to the hydrology of Southwest Florida recording rain events, tracking inches of rainfall, crawling through storm drains to observe and record water flow patterns, which gave our company immeasurable amounts of data that no one else had. Andy was instrumental in pioneering the company's water management database system which contains more than a half century of water resources data.

During his role as Director of the Water Resources market group, Andy has been at the forefront of providing efficient solutions to some of the region's most pressing water-related challenges. He has spearheaded numerous projects aimed at managing water resources, mitigating flooding risks,

and safeguarding the environment for future generations. His expertise in hydrologic modeling, watershed analysis, and stormwater management has played a pivotal role in the development of comprehensive master plans for numerous cities and counties in the area. During his tenure, he embraced emerging technologies, pioneering computer modeling techniques that helped Johnson Engineering remain at the forefront of innovation in the water resource field.

Andy's impact on Johnson Engineering's growth and success is undeniable. From his pivotal role in expanding the company's presence into new territories like LaBelle and Clewiston to his leadership in major projects such Babcock Ranch and the Midfield Expansion at Southwest Florida International Airport, Andy's legacy is integral to our decades of success.

Known for his strong faith, Andy Tilton is also a man of integrity, unwavering commitment, and unparalleled work ethic. He is an incredible mentor for the next generation of engineers who have had the privilege of working alongside him. As we honor Andy's career and bid him farewell, we extend our sincerest wishes for a retirement filled with joy, relaxation, and new adventures. Andy's presence will be deeply missed, but his legacy will continue to inspire us for years to come. ■



Andy was District Engineer for Telegraph Cypress Water Management District for more than 25 years. The District covered about 140 square miles in Charlotte and Lee Counties.



Throughout Andy's career, he was an active member of the community, sat on countless committees, and joined numerous organizations. He remained knowledgeable of the ever-changing rules and regulations throughout our industry, and was an advocate for responsible legislation.

## RIVERDALE HIGH SCHOOL UNDERGOES A MUCH-NEEDED RENOVATION

Johnson Engineering is proud to be the civil engineer collaborating closely with GHC Architects DBA BSSW Architects for the much-needed renovation of Riverdale High School in Lee County. Established in 1972, the school is currently undergoing vital renovations to enhance overall campus infrastructure, accommodating the growing student population, and facilitating extracurricular activities.

The renovation plans include the construction of a new science building, a new sports complex gymnasium spanning approximately 40,400 square feet, as well as new sports fields, sand volleyball courts, and additional student parking.

This extensive project involves numerous components and requires close collaboration with various companies. Adding to the complexity, renovations are occurring during school hours, with 2,000 students present. Throughout the project, our foremost priority is ensuring student safety while minimizing disruptions to the school's daily operations. This includes the critical task of renovating the sanitary sewer, fire, and potable water systems without interruption of service.

One of the most significant enhancements is the redesigned front access, aimed at optimizing parent pick-up and drop-off procedures. By consolidating the school access points from three to one, the new design prioritizes safety and security while improving traffic flow during peak hours.

We recognize the pivotal role that educational institutions play in shaping the future, and we take great pride in contributing our expertise to projects that enhance learning environments for students in our community.

For more information contact Dana Hume at (239) 461-2471 or dhume@johnsoneng.com. ■



Rendering courtesy of BSSW Architects.



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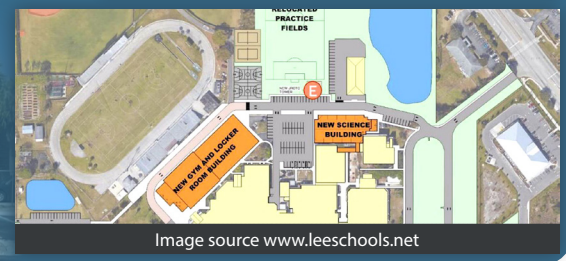


Image source www.leeschools.net

## NAVIGATING THE TURBULENT WATERS: IMPLICATIONS & STRATEGIES FOLLOWING THE FLORIDA STATE 404 PROGRAM UPDATES

In December 2020, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) "assumed" the Section 404 federal wetland permitting program from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for certain non-tidally influenced projects in Florida. However, on February 15, 2024, the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C. issued a decision to vacate the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) "approval of Florida's assumption application," effectively ending the Florida State 404 program. The Court stated that the EPA and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) "committed a serious error" by allowing the state program to utilize Section 7 (of the Endangered Species Act) Incidental Take protection, which is limited to federal agencies and actions and provides legal protection for certain "incidental" or minor impacts to endangered species.

The Court decision indicated that State 404 permits issued to date remain valid. Florida's state wetlands regulations and permitting authority (called Environmental Resource Permits (ERP)) and USACE 404 wetland permit applications for projects in retained waters remain unaffected. However, projects awaiting FDEP's State 404 permit review are now in limbo, as the FDEP cannot act on pending State 404 applications and are not currently providing compliance oversight of existing State 404 permits.

Recognizing the ever-changing nature of environmental permitting, our team is proactively assisting our clients affected by this development. Our ecologists are diligently preparing and submitting new 404 applications to USACE to mitigate project delays. While the duration of court proceedings remains uncertain, we're committed to closely monitoring the situation and offering guidance as it unfolds.

For further information, please contact Laura Brady Herrero at (239) 461-2457 or lbh@johnsoneng.com. ■





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## CHARTING THE COURSE: RSW MASTER PLAN UPDATE TAKES FLIGHT

Johnson Engineering's planning team is celebrating acceptance by the FAA of the Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW) Master Plan Update.

Our firm has supported RSW's development since its inception in 1983. RSW is a gateway to Southwest Florida and has welcomed more than 10 million passengers in 2023 and ranks among the top 50 airports in the United States for passenger traffic.

Airport master planning is important to ensure the timing and scope of needed improvements are planned, permitted, and funded to align with aviation industry trends and our region's growing needs. Over a two-year long planning process, our planning team managed an extensive team of specialists to assess all aspects of airside, landside, terminal, and non-aviation future development opportunities and constraints. We evaluated the facility needs generated by anticipated growth in demand and determined the timing and strategy for implementing improvements. From rental car facility upgrades slated for 2028, to a future parallel runway anticipated in the 2040s, the plan defines "right-sized" improvements for the next 20 years.

Public engagement was facilitated via an online portal and public meetings, and engagement opportunities were posted in the newspaper and on social media.

Lee County now has a Master Plan Update prioritizing safety, efficiency, and resilience so that RSW is positioned for 20 more years of continued success. For more information contact Laura DeJohn, AICP at (239) 280-4331 or [ldejohn@johnsoneng.com](mailto:ldejohn@johnsoneng.com). ■

