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Glades Tackling Vacant, Blighted Structures with County's Help

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It has been said that sometimes you have to tear it down before you can build it up. That's exactly what is happening as part of the Glades Demolition Program.

Palm Beach County, through the departments of Economic Sustainability, Risk Management, and Facilities Development & Operations, has partnered with the cities of Belle

Glade, Pahokee and South Bay to demolish approximately 70 vacated and unsafe structures and remove them from Glades neighborhoods.

The project is being funded by \$1 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Neighborhood Stabilization Program 3 and Community Development Block Grant programs. Project activity includes structural demolitions, abatement of asbestos where needed, and removal of debris.

The purpose of the program is to remove abandoned structures that negatively impact neighborhoods and can become havens for unlawful activity. One of the goals of the project is to encourage redevelopment and reinvestment in the communities.

City officials have prioritized specific properties to be addressed and are working with county staff to clear them away. Belle Glade City Manager Lomax Harrelle expressed appreciation for the county's partnership in the venture.

"Several nuisance structures located throughout the city have been demolished and many others are in the pipeline to be taken down in the very near future," he said. "Palm Beach County has been excellent to work with and we value the county's commitment to assisting Belle Glade and the greater Glades area."

Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office deputies for the western communities see the program as helpful in achieving their community policing efforts by cleaning up areas that attract and conceal the criminal element.

"The elimination of these unsafe structures will enable the Glades to move forward toward a safer community by stopping the spread of crime that buildings such as these can produce," said PBSO Lt. Edward Luty. "In observance of the community policing philosophy, we believe that maintaining and monitoring urban environments in a well-ordered condition may stop further vandalism and escalation into more serious crime."



This abandoned house on SE 3rd Street in Belle Glade is one of 70 structures targeted for removal.

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