



Continued from page 4

Altamonte Springs is the lowest tax rates in Florida, has the lowest millage rate per resident in Seminole County, and is completely debt-free. Though highly regarded for its business climate and environmental leadership, Altamonte Springs never loses sight of its most important constituent—its residents.

An Innovative Program

The A-FIRST project is an innovative stormwater management initiative aimed at increasing alternative water supplies for Altamonte Springs and the neighboring City of Apopka, while significantly reducing pollutant loads to the Little Wekiva River. There are several unique aspects of the project:

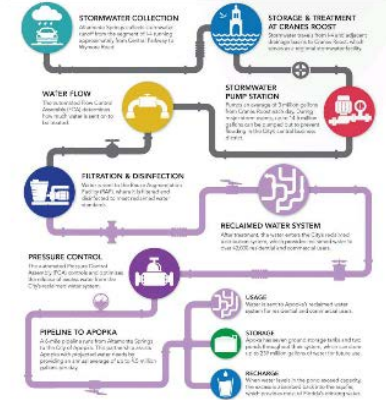
- It is extremely innovative from an engineering standpoint. It is the first project of its kind in the United States and can serve as a model for future projects in Florida and around the country. The most significant aspect of A-FIRST is the partnerships that are created, resulting in a new model for multi-agency coordination and accomplishment. Multiple governments and agencies worked together to come up with new ways to solve problems, as opposed to the same old "cookie cutter" approach.

- It is just the latest initiative by the City to conserve water. The city's Project APRICOT (A Prototype Realistic Innovative Community of Today), implemented in the 1980s and the first of its kind in the country, made it possible to deliver reclaimed water to almost every property for lawn, landscape, and other non-drinking purposes. Many cities struggle to deliver reclaimed water to new communities; Project APRICOT focused on retrofitting existing neighborhoods and developments with reclaimed water, and has been doing it for more than 25 years.
- The project is the result of Altamonte Springs creating a new business model that requires support and participation with FDOT, FDEP, the St. Johns Water Management District, and the City of Apopka, as well as from Sen. David Simmons. Altamonte Springs conceived the project and will continue to manage construction and operations.

- Specifics of the project are as follows:
 - It eliminated the need for another massive retention pond that would have been necessary as part of the I-4 construction project, and will utilize the increased runoff that the project will generate.

- Stormwater from the section of I-4 at Altamonte Springs is captured, Brown Cranes Road. This avoids the expansion building and maintaining a large retention pond.
- The stormwater from I-4 is pumped, recommissioned water treatment which creates additional savings by piping one of the City's water plants.
- The I-4 stormwater is cleaned, filtered, rinsed, recovered, and used as irrigated water instead of being lost to a retention pond, recovering and using the stormwater, gal of alternative water supply are every year.
- When there is excess recovered water, Altamonte Springs sends the additional water to the City of Apopka through constructed to help meet Apopka's demand for water.
- Excess water used to be pumped from both Cranes Road and the Altamonte Springs Regional Water Reclamation Facility into the Little Wekiva River. With this project, the City eliminates the discharge of 31 tons of nitrogen and 14 tons of phosphorus from the Little Wekiva River every year.

Altamonte Springs Creates New Water Supplies



4 January 2016 • Florida Water Resources Journal

The City of Altamonte Springs recently celebrated another innovative step in creating alternative water supplies with the grand opening of the Altamonte-First Integrated Reuse and Stormwater Treatment (A-FIRST) project. Just over a year ago, ground was broken on an innovative project designed to mitigate stormwater retention overflows for the City's I-4 Ultimate Improvement Project, address regional water supply needs, and provide water quality improvements within the Wekiva River Basin. Through a joint partnership with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), and the St. Johns Water Management District, A-FIRST is now a reality.

The A-FIRST project won the Excellence Award given by the Florida Stormwater Association, which recognizes stormwater projects for their commitment to innovation and benefits to the environment and citizens.

Background

The mission of A-FIRST is to "Innovate Today for Water Tomorrow." It's the result of a collaborative effort among many entities to come up with a unique way of saving water and money, while protecting the environment. This project exemplifies how the City provided innovative, forward-thinking solutions for solving complex issues involving water, transportation, and the environment, and saving taxpayer dollars. The A-FIRST project:

- Creates a new supply of 4.5 million gal of reclaimed water a day.
- Eliminates the need for another massive retention pond.
- Prevents thousands of pounds of phosphorus and nitrogen from flowing into the Little Wekiva River each year.
- Saves the state \$15 million in construction costs for the I-4 Ultimate Improvement Project.
- Saves 19.4 percent of the total phosphorus loading for the entire 513-sq-mi Wekiva Basin, even though only 2 percent of the area is within the Wekiva Basin Management Action Plan.

About the City of Altamonte Springs

Altamonte Springs is a city known for its innovation and progressive ideas. The City has

Continued on page 6

