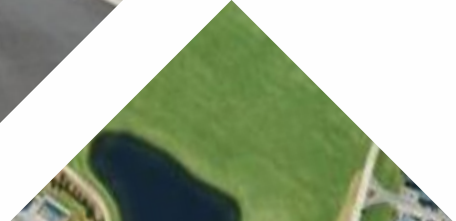


2023

**COMMUNICATIONS
SUMMARY REPORT**

Presented March 2024



COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Amanda Oreskovich - Public Relations Coordinator

Katie Smith - Management Analyst II

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INTRODUCTION

This report is being presented to the Town Manager and the Commission in order to comply with Belleair's Strategic Plan. This document allows for transparency and open dialogue between staff and the Commission, and facilitates active monitoring of our collective communication efforts. The aim of this report is to evaluate communications data, find opportunities for improvement, and develop strategies to enhance living and working in Belleair.

2023 was a challenging year for the Communications Team, as new hurdles seemed to emerge around every turn. An extended absence of our Public Relations Coordinator, multiple capital projects, a large-scale Solid Waste information campaign, and the switch to Pinellas County's water supply are a few of the challenges that come to mind.

The past year has presented wonderful opportunities to take new initiatives, embark on new projects, and learn a lot along the way.

The Town of Belleair is proud to share the results of this year through the lens of opportunities seized and lessons learned in 2023. We encourage any and all feedback toward our common goals to refine processes and maximize communications quality.



2023 TOP STORIES

Each year, a handful of social media stories rise above other day-to-day communications and receive a larger amount of support and recognition from followers. As we reflect on the past year, some of 2023's top stories are below.



Phase 1 of the Indian Rocks Road project REOPENS
1,268 engagements



Young resident wears Solid Waste Halloween costume
782 engagements



Santa Claus visits the Town of Belleair on a fire truck
731 engagements



Sgt. Cooper and Sgt. Maul pinning ceremony
382 engagements



Belleair PD at a Feeding the Fosters charity event
275 engagements



Officer Jeffery Tackett flag folding ceremony
253 engagements

Engagements include: collective likes, reactions, comments, shares, sends, and clicks across social media platforms

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS (SWOT)

This SWOT Analysis is meant to help visualize key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the Town’s communications processes and activities. This analysis is pivotal to leveraging strengths, growing from weaknesses, and achieving objectives that are aligned with our mission statement: To deliver high-quality communications, services, and experiences throughout and within Belleair that have a small-town, personal feel.

Town of Belleair Communications	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of Belleair’s communication platforms have large follower bases in place. • Consistent information across various platforms. • Quality service by Town staff, which enables citizen trust and allows for positive publicity. • Responsiveness to resident comments/questions on social media. • A cross-departmental Communications Team promotes successful and cohesive communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public communication requires strong internal communication. Employees wear many hats and are often pulled in multiple directions, which makes it challenging to spend time on internal communication efforts. • Generational and technological gaps exist among employees and residents, which makes it difficult to reach all demographics. • Only one staff member handles public communications for the Town. Having little backup can present a challenge at times.
	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many inexpensive or free communications tools are available to be utilized (social media, e-blasts, etc). • It is important to take advantage of social media’s evolving trends (reels, hashtags, etc). • Fostering relationships with local organizations, businesses, and municipalities can present strong communications/marketing opportunities. • Taking every opportunity to collect resident input creates an engaged and informed community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media algorithms continuously evolve and become more complex. It is important to adapt swiftly and navigate these algorithmic shifts to maximize engagement. • Rapid growth in the range of communications tools available makes it challenging to pinpoint appropriate tools and communication channels. • Negative publicity/comments are always a possibility when sharing communications on public platforms.

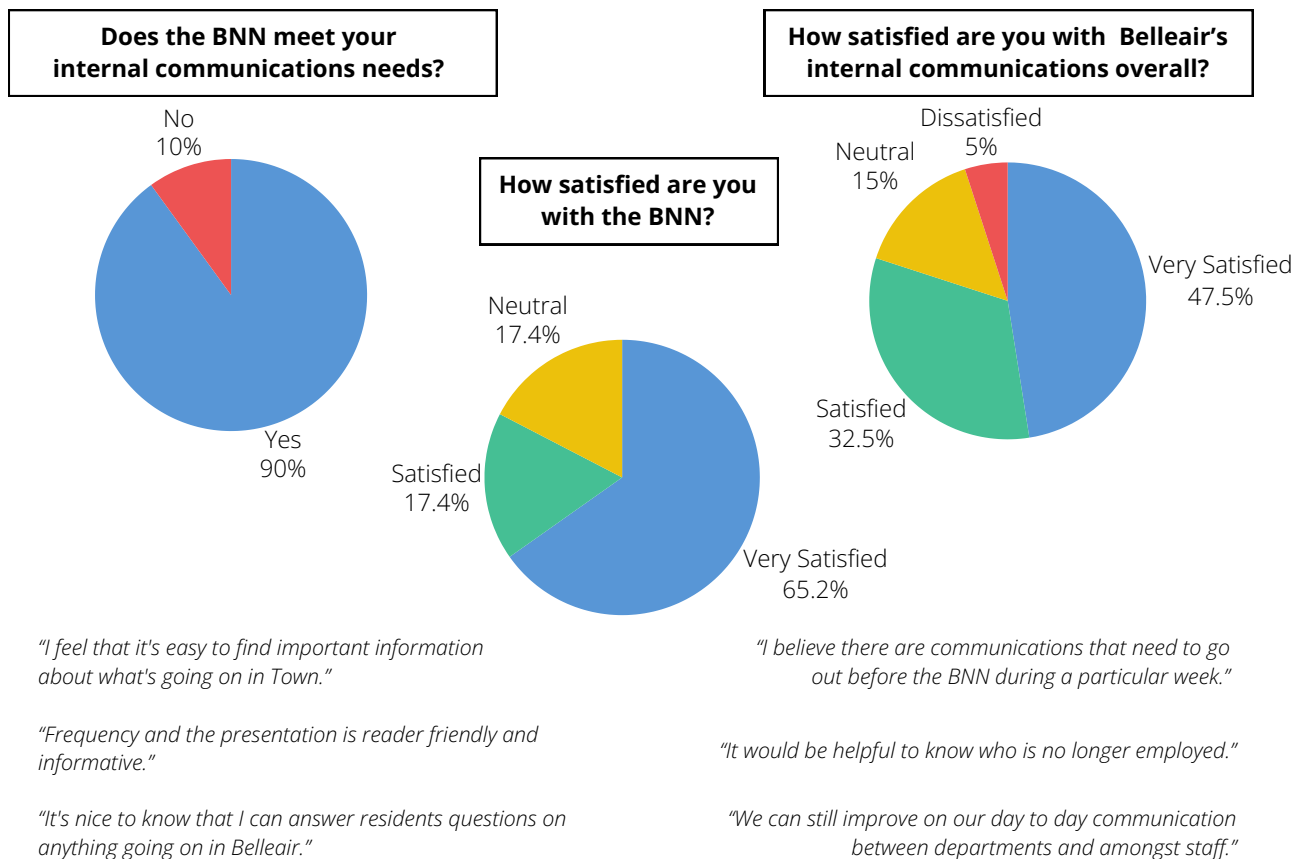
2023 COMMUNICATIONS DATA

This section discusses each of Belleair’s communications tools and then breaks down the analytics of each tool over the past year. These measurable statistics help to set goals and objectives for the 2024 calendar year.

BELLEAIR NEWS NETWORK (BNN) AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Belleair News Network (BNN) is an employee newsletter that is distributed every Friday to all Town staff. This tool collects and distributes information from all departments to keep employees informed.

Each year, a survey is issued to all employees to collect feedback on Belleair’s internal communications. The results are a helpful tool to determine opportunities for growth within our internal communication efforts. The information below reflects the data from the most recent survey.

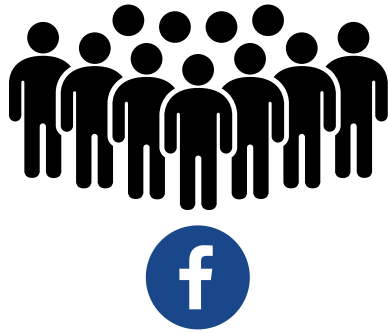


The highest rating of any internal communications category was **schedules and events**

The lowest rating of any internal communications category was **policies and procedures** - this is an opportunity for improvement over the coming year

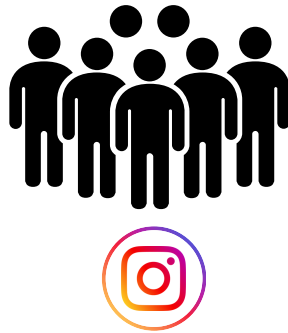
TRADITIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA OVERVIEW

While Belleair maintains multiple accounts considered social media by definition, the “big three” platforms Belleair utilizes include Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), and Instagram. The graphic below depicts the current follower base for each of these accounts.



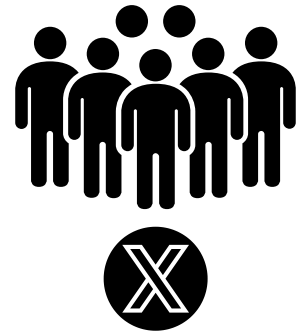
FACEBOOK

Town: 2.6 K followers
Rec: 2.7 K followers



INSTAGRAM

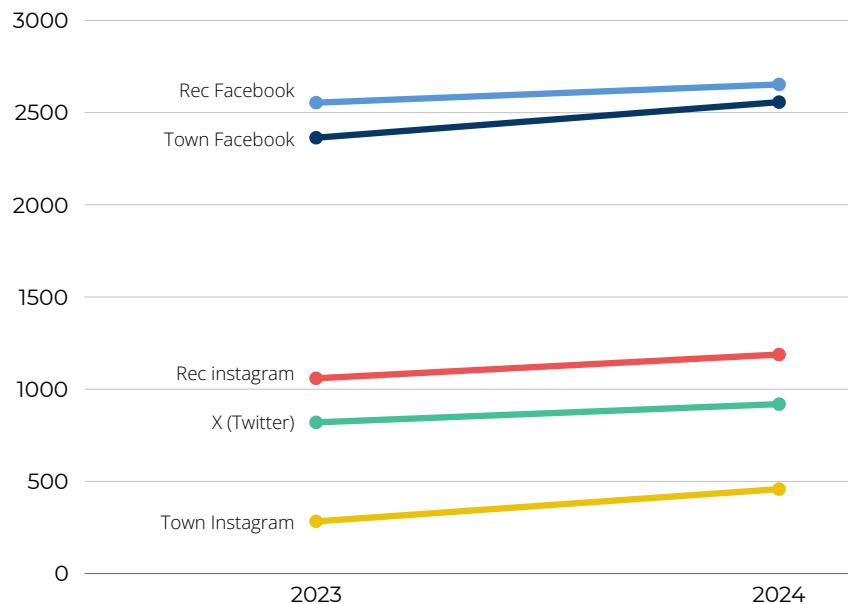
Town: 458 followers
Rec: 1.1K followers



X (TWITTER)

919 followers

As seen above, Facebook continues to have the largest reach of Belleair’s traditional social media platforms, with the Parks and Recreation Facebook page having the highest follower count. All accounts continue to show slow, steady growth. While the Town’s Instagram account grew the most in 2023, it still has the lowest follower count of the “big three” platforms. Instagram is one of the largest social media networks in the world, so this presents an opportunity for improvement over the coming year.



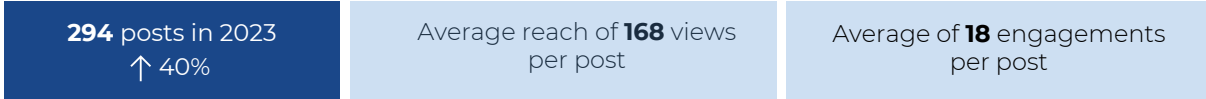
2023 Follower Growth

- Rec Facebook ↑4%
- Town Facebook ↑8%
- Rec Instagram ↑5.5%
- X (Twitter) ↑12%
- Town Instagram ↑62%

TOWN OF BELLEAIR FACEBOOK

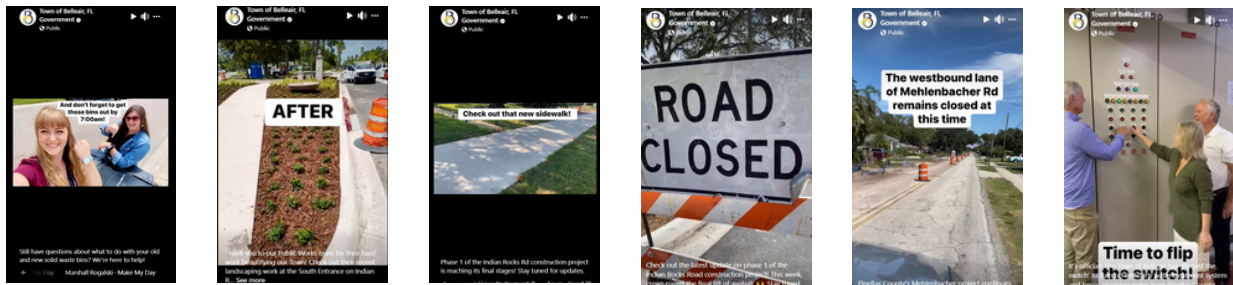
The Town of Belleair's main Facebook page currently maintains 2.6 K followers.

Throughout 2023, staff posted to this Facebook page 294 times for an average of 5.65 posts per week. Post frequency increased 40% from 2022 to 2023 (with 210 posts in 2022).



Trends for post success remain similar to previous years, with “feel-good” stories about staff, residents, and events performing the best. Content that features the Belleair Police Department consistently has a high level of engagement.

The Town of Belleair Facebook page posted 6 reels (short videos) in 2023 with an average of 836 views per reel. Reels are currently one of social media's fastest growing content formats. The Town has the opportunity to take advantage of this in 2024 by posting more reels to boost engagement.



RECREATION FACEBOOK

The Parks and Recreation Department's Facebook page currently has a following of 2.7 K users. Posts on this page are generally aimed at promoting special events and recreation programming.

Throughout 2023, staff posted to this Facebook page 106 times for an average of about 2 posts per week. Post frequency decreased 20.9% from 2022 to 2023 (with 134 posts in 2022).

In 2024, the Recreation department aims to increase frequency of postings to keep the community informed and engaged, and share more fun stories and behind the scenes content to garner higher engagement.

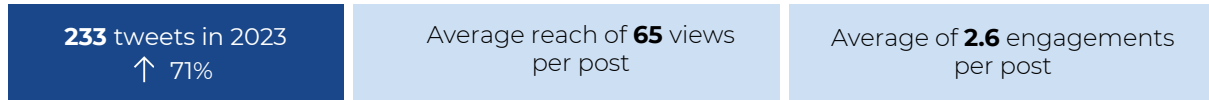


TOWN OF BELLEAIR X

The Town's X account currently has just over 900 followers.

Throughout 2023, staff posted 233 times for an average of 4.48 posts (tweets) per week. Post frequency increased 71% from 2022 to 2023 (with 136 posts in 2022).

Belleair's tweets are most effective when they are direct and informative (as contrasted by the "feel-good" tone that does well on Facebook). Activity on this account grew immensely from 2022 to 2023, and the goal is to keep that momentum into 2024, by continuing to post consistently.



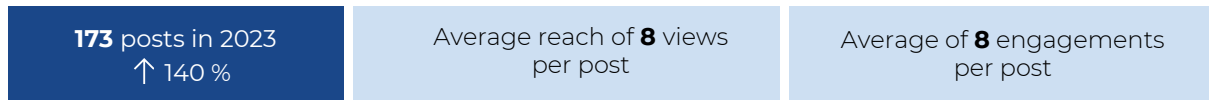
TOWN OF BELLEAIR INSTAGRAM

The Town of Belleair Instagram is Belleair's newest social media account. It was created in June 2022 and currently has just over 450 followers.

Throughout 2023, staff posted 173 times for an average of 3.3 posts per week. Post frequency increased 140% from 2022 to 2023 (with 72 posts in 2022).

The Town's Instagram accounts tend to have less posts than our other platforms, due to the use of stories (short highlights that expire after 24 hours). On Instagram, information is typically only shared once in a post and then repeated or followed up in stories. This account shared 101 stories in 2023. It also shared the same 6 reels that were posted to Facebook, with an average of 453 views per video.

In 2024, the plan is to increase the Town's Instagram following by maintaining frequent posts and stories, sharing more reels, and taking advantage of social media algorithms.



RECREATION INSTAGRAM

The Parks and Recreation Department's Instagram account boasted 1.1 K followers as of January 2024.

Throughout 2023, staff posted 125 times for an average of 2.4 posts per week. Post frequency increased 10.6% from 2022 to 2023 (with 113 posts in 2022). This account shared 131 stories in 2023.

Like the Recreation Facebook page, this account has proven to be a great resource for advertising recreation programs and events, as well as for keeping parents updated on the daily happenings at the Dimmitt Community Center. The Parks and Recreation Department plans on continuing to post to Instagram regularly in 2024 to gain additional followers and reach into the community further.



NEXTDOOR

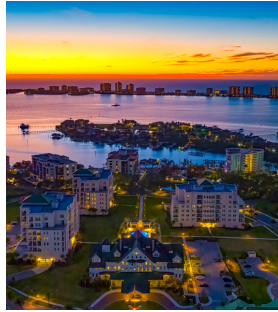
Nextdoor is a selective, neighborhood social media platform that the Town of Belleair contributes to through an “agency” account.

In 2023, the Town posted to Nextdoor 240 times for an average of 4.6 posts per week. Post frequency increased 13% from 2022 to 2023 (with 212 posts in 2022).

Any communications that are shared on the Town’s “big three” social media accounts are also shared on Nextdoor. It is important to note that the Town has limitations when using Nextdoor compared to other social media platforms. Namely, Nextdoor is designed so that a government agency account can not react, comment, or get involved with any posts it does not generate. This means the Town is not able to engage with residents on Nextdoor in the same transparent and accessible ways allowed through Facebook, X, and Instagram.



**Nextdoor’s “Impressions” metric includes: views, clicks, and interactions.*



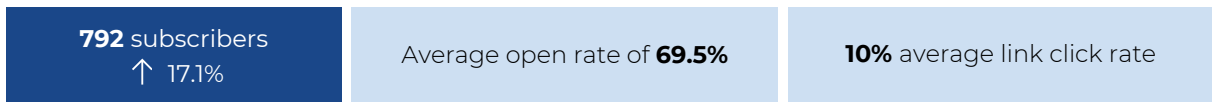
ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORMS

TOWN OF BELLEAIR E-BLASTS (MAILCHIMP)

The Town of Belleair uses MailChimp as a free e-blast tool to send a monthly resident newsletter called Town Topics, as well as various important notices and emergency alerts. In 2023, the Town Topics newsletter was sent on the first of each month. In addition to Town Topics, six e-blast alerts were sent, which included Hurricane Idalia alerts, Solid Waste updates, and Water Department Notices.

Previously, the Town used MailChimp to send four resident newsletters per year, called “Quarterly Updates.” This changed in the summer of 2022, when the newsletter was renamed “Town Topics” and its frequency was increased to become a monthly publication.

This platform gained 116 new subscribers in 2023, marking a 17.1% increase. There were 676 subscribers at the beginning of 2023 and 792 at the end. The majority of subscribers used the registration form embedded through the Town’s website to sign up. Open rates and link click rates remained relatively stable throughout the year.



EVERBRIDGE (ALERT PINELLAS)

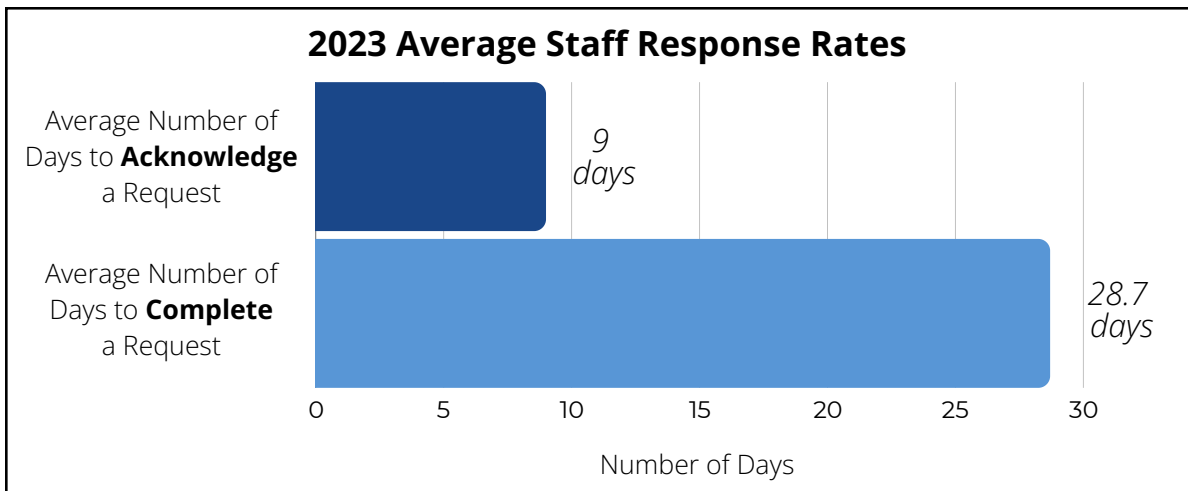
Everbridge (also known as Alert Pinellas) is a “reverse 911” program that allows the Town (or Pinellas County) to send mass messages to subscribers via phone calls, text messages, and/or emails. Pinellas County oversees alerts for severe weather warnings, while the Town uses this tool for local messages with two primary purposes:

- 1.Solid Waste holiday pickup schedule reminders
- 2.Emergency alerts

Upon receiving Everbridge alerts, subscribers are prompted to confirm receipt of the message. In 2023, there was a 7% confirmation rate (about 250 contacts out of 3,560 total). In 2024, staff will continue to utilize Everbridge for important alerts, and take better advantage of the platforms selective location messaging feature (alerts may be sent to a smaller group of contacts, living in a specific location).

SECLICKFIX

SeeClickFix is a citizen engagement tool that allows residents to request assistance or report non-emergency issues to the Town online, and to then have transparent, open communication with staff about the issue(s) at-hand. SeeClickFix uses three categories to tag requests: “Open” requests are new and have not yet been reviewed, “Acknowledged” requests have been examined by staff (and indicate communication has begun between parties), and “Closed” requests have been completed or are on a path to completion.



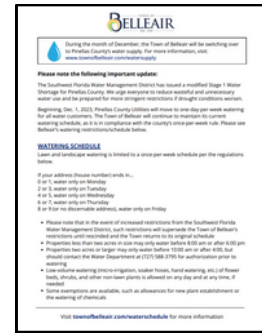
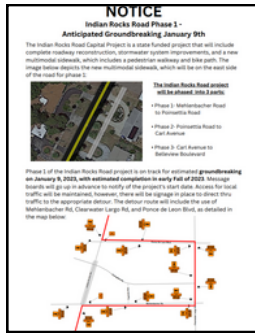
A total of 70 SeeClickFix requests were submitted by residents and closed by staff throughout 2023. It took an average of 9 days for Staff to acknowledge these requests and an average of 28.7 days to complete these requests. This response rate indicates that a significant improvement is necessary as we move forward. Throughout 2023, there was a recurring issue of requests being completed, without any follow up on SeeClickFix. This issue has since been resolved.

In 2024, there are two main goals aimed at improving the Town’s use of SeeClickFix. The first is to acknowledge every request within one business day and complete every reasonable request within two weeks. The second goal is to promote SeeClickFix on all social media platforms, so that more residents are aware this tool exists, leading to more utilization of it.

UTILITY INSERTS

The Town inserted 29 flyers inside of utility bills in 2023. These inserts included event promotions, informational topics (Belleair Auto-Pay, Solid Waste regulations, etc.), and significant Town updates (capital project kick-off, water supply updates, etc).

Utility inserts are typically reserved for major updates or information, partially due to the limitations of their timeline. A utility insert must be submitted approximately 2 weeks before it is delivered with the next bill.



WEBSITE

The Town of Belleair's website is a vast storage hub of informational content for the Town. It ensures that information is publicly available and accessible. In 2023, website traffic included 61, 043 users visiting the site, with 168,932 total page views. The website metrics for 2023 are outlined below.

Top Visited Pages

168,932 total page views

Parks and Recreation
Building
Jobs
Special Events

Top Search Items

5,551 total searches

Pickleball
Jobs
Trash
Permits

Top Downloaded Documents

4,540 total downloads

Solid Waste Holiday Schedule
Belleair Zoning Map
Utility Billing Rates
2023 Summer Camp Schedule

The numbers above are evidence that residents and employees are visiting the Town website frequently, looking for a wide variety of information. In 2024, the Town will continue to direct residents to the website by including links on all communications platforms. There is also an opportunity to improve timely updating, by ensuring the communications team is conducting ongoing website reviews.



2024 COMMUNICATIONS GOALS

After evaluating the successes and challenges of 2023, a set of strategies was established to be addressed in 2024. The communications mission and its three overarching goals were considered while developing these strategies.

COMMUNICATIONS MISSION

To deliver high-quality communications, services, and experiences throughout and within Belleair that have a small-town, personal feel.

GOAL 1

Improve the processes by which we communicate to all of our stakeholders



STRATEGIES

- Work to increase social media following, especially on the Town Instagram, to improve online engagement
- Take advantage of Everbridge’s selective location messaging feature
- Promote the use of SeeClickFix on social media to increase usage

GOAL 2

Create Town of Belleair communications that are our “best foot forward”



STRATEGIES

- Create and post more reels (videos) on social media accounts
- Acknowledge all SeeClickFix requests within one business day and complete reasonable requests within two weeks.
- Collaborate with the Communications Team to conduct ongoing website reviews

GOAL 3

Empower employee engagement and success through proactive initiatives and projects



STRATEGIES

- Work alongside Human Resources to improve accessibility of information about staff policies and procedures
- Brainstorm and implement ways to strengthen interdepartmental communications
- Create and post more behind the scenes stories and highlights that feature Town employees