

Cindy Rodriguez BIO

Cindy Rodriguez currently serves as a Sr. Government Affairs Program Manager with the Southwest Florida Water Management District. In that role, she has the honor to work with local governments and constituents across the heartland counties of Hardee, Highlands and Polk.

Cindy earned her bachelor's degree in Mass Communications/Public Relations from the University of South Florida and has enjoyed a successful public relations/public affairs career spanning 30 years in both the public and private sectors. She is the former Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs director for the Polk County Board of County Commissioners, and during her tenure at the County, Cindy oversaw the county's legislative efforts, PGTV and the organization's comprehensive internal/external communications initiatives. She and her team were honored to receive multiple local, state, national and international awards of excellence for many accomplishments achieved under her leadership.

Some of Cindy's other professional achievements include:

- Past President of Polk Arts Alliance; Florida Government Communicators Association and the Polk County Chapter of the Florida Public Relations Association (FPRA)
- Serving two terms on FPRA's State Executive Committee as V.P. of Chapter Services and V.P. of Professional Development, respectively.
- Earning FPRA's prestigious "John Dillin Public Relations Professional of the Year" award from her Central Florida colleagues.
- Leading the team that brought home the 2007 "All America County" designation to Polk County
- Leading Crisis Communications efforts during the devastating 2004 Hurricane season when the eyes of THREE hurricanes crossed directly over Polk, and also during the aftermath of the tragic 70-car Interstate 4 pile-up.
- Serving on the Arts/Culture/Heritage subcommittee of the County Tourist Development Council
- Actively engaging in recent successful efforts to establish the Polk Regional Water Cooperative as a mechanism to address long-range, sustainable water supply solutions for the County and its municipalities.

Cindy is also a **certified public manager** and, as she puts it... spent three **LONG** (but very productive) years as a registered lobbyist carrying the banner for the county's legislative priorities. And, if you know anything about Tallahassee politics, you'll understand that statement.

On a personal level, Cindy is a 6th generation Polk County native who enjoys spending time with family – especially her 4-year-old granddaughter; reading; traveling; enjoying and supporting the arts (any kind, anywhere, any time!); gardening and volunteering her time and expertise in both advisory and hands-on roles for many local organizations and engaging in activities that protect the environment and promote community prosperity for future generations.

A self-professed **"policy wonk,"** Cindy is pleased to moderate tonight's candidate forum and wishes to thank all the candidates for their willingness to serve in public office – a noble endeavor, indeed!