



Trash Talk

IOP Public Works
Director
Donnie Pitts

BY BRIAN SHERMAN

Ask a random Isle of Palms resident about the main purpose of the town's Public Works Department and, chances are, the first thing he or she will mention is collecting the garbage, showing up on the same day each week and hauling off items ranging from kitchen trash and last night's leftovers to broken down washing machines and overused mattresses.

Fair enough. But there's more to operating a Public Works Department than making sure the garbage trucks are up and running and making their rounds on schedule. Just ask Isle of Palms Public Works Director Donnie Pitts, who for 13 years has headed the team that is tasked with keeping the island trash-free, immaculate, unlikely to flood and in compliance with government rules and guidelines that regulate everything from storm water to underground fuel storage tanks.

Pitts pointed out that those tanks, two at department headquarters on Palm Boulevard and four more at the IOP marina, represent the most stressful part of the job he has held since 2004 because each of them must continue to pass a rigorous South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control test. He physically inspects each tank once a month.

"If you don't have a passing test, you can't buy more fuel," Pitts said. "It's critical for all the tanks to be able to

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Photos by Brian Sherman