

Charlotte County update for 9/30/20

Latest sales tax project delivered: Centennial Park pool

By Hector Flores, Charlotte County administrator

On Thursday, commissioners, staff, contractors, advisory board members and park patrons commemorated the opening of the Centennial Park pool with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. In addition to the local residents and visitors who will be enjoying this pool, we're going to see many visiting college and high school swim teams compete here and contribute to the local economy.

The pool event followed last week's ribbon-cutting at the William R. Gaines Jr. Veterans Memorial Park. On Wednesday staff conducted a Facebook Live session to solicit public input on the Placida West Boat Ramp project. Last week, work began on the Family Services Center in Port Charlotte.

All four projects were funded with the 1% local option sales tax approved by Charlotte County voters in 2014. With design work underway on the boat ramp, 25 of the 26 projects on the Tier 1 and 2 lists have been completed, are under construction or in the design phase. The other project, the widening of Toledo Blade Boulevard in Murdock Village will be done by the developers of Arredondo Point, the new multiuse project that last week closed on its purchase of 95 acres in Murdock Village.

Delivering on promised projects is a top priority for the county. Residents put their trust in us to invest this money in public safety, quality of life, infrastructure and school projects. Since 1994, more than 120 projects have been funded with the local option sales tax. Driving around the county or visiting some of the facilities built with sales tax money, you'll see signs outside and decals on entry doors reminding you of your investment. The sales tax has had a transformational impact on our community.

A referendum is on the ballot this fall to extend the local option sales tax for six years. The extension would fund more than 20 projects throughout Charlotte County, including in the City of Punta Gorda, which receives about 10% of the revenue generated. If revenues exceed projections, up to seven additional county projects could be funded. Voters who requested mail-in ballots have already begun receiving them. Early voting at three polling locations begins Oct. 19. Election Day is Nov. 3.

In addition to the signs and decals, the county's educational efforts have included giving bookmarks to library patrons, distributing flyers at speaking engagements at community meetings and taking questions in a Facebook Live session that was simulcast on CC-TV, the county television channel. The first of three videos highlighting the projects on the 2020 local option sales tax list premiered on CC-TV and Facebook last week. Two more will follow this week and next.

To learn more about the sales tax, visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov/salestax. It's a one-stop shop all things sales tax: project lists, past and present; maps; a video archive of staff updates and more.

If your organization is planning a meeting and needs a speaker, please contact us and we will arrange for someone to give a presentation and take questions from your members. To

schedule a presentation, contact Brian Gleason at 941-741-1462 or email Brian.Gleason@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.

Thanks for your time and please vote.

Readers may reach Charlotte County Administrator Hector Flores at Hector.Flores@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.