

Charlotte County update for 1/29/20

A vision for the future of transportation

By Ray Sandrock, Charlotte County administrator

We are witnessing perhaps the biggest transformation in transportation since Henry Ford's introduction of the car assembly line more than 100 years ago. From ride-sharing to electric vehicles and even driverless cars, the only constant in the industry is change – rapid change.

Right here in Charlotte County, Babcock Ranch is one of only a few places in the country where driverless vehicles are in use on public roads. Babcock's autonomous shuttle is a demonstration project for now, but plans call for smaller one- or two-person pods that can deliver passengers to and from locations within the rapidly growing community.

The pace of change calls for the county to be forward-looking and innovative when it comes to planning and building transportation infrastructure, whether it's roads, sidewalks, multiuse paths, parking requirements, charging stations, public garages and more.

The County Commission last week heard a presentation from the Florida Department of Transportation about its U.S. 41 Corridor Vision Plan. After a year-long series of public meetings, the DOT is finalizing its plan and will publish it later this year. It covers everything from safety to streetlights to beautification to wayfinding. To view the draft brochure, visit CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click BCC Agendas, then Agenda Archive and Jan 21 Board Workshop.

The Charlotte County-Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization is also looking at future transportation needs. The MPO is a policy-making organization made up of representatives from local government. In Charlotte County the board includes three commissioners, a Punta Gorda City Council member and a Charlotte County Airport Authority commissioner.

MPO staff is currently working on the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan. The two elements of the plan are identifying the transportation needs of our community and determining how will we pay for them. Your input is valuable in this process. Please take a moment to fill out a brief online survey. Visit CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click the survey banner at the top of the page. For more information about the MPO and its plan, visit ccmpo.com and click the 2045 LRTP link in the top menu.

Tourism award

Congratulations to the Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor & Convention Bureau on winning two Adrian Awards, the most prestigious global tourism marketing competition by Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International, for its work to promote the county as Florida's premier Gulf Coast destination.

The bureau won a bronze award for its Outsiders Welcome video campaign, which highlights the county's natural beauty and range of outside activities available to visitors (and residents). It also earned a silver award for its Visitor Guide, a journal of things to do and see in our area.

To view the Outsiders Welcome videos, visit www.pureflorida.com and scroll down to the Meet the Outsiders section. To get a Visitor Guide, visit the tourism bureau at 1700 Tamiami Trail, Suite G-2 in Port Charlotte or order it or view it online. Click Maps & More in the top menu.

Black History

The Mid-County Regional Library will be screening two films in February as part of its Black History Film Series. *Get Out* by director Jordan Peele will be shown at 5:30 p.m., Feb. 3 and *Loving* by Jeff Nichols will be shown at 5:30 p.m., Feb. 10. This program is free and open to the public. No tickets or reservations needed. For information, please call 941.613.3192. The film series is sponsored by the Blanchard House Museum and Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

Mid-County Regional Library is located at 2050 Forrest Nelson Blvd., in Port Charlotte.

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