

Charlotte County update for 6/10/20

## **County implements phased reopening of facilities**

By Hector Flores, Charlotte County Administrator

Charlotte County's phased reopening of facilities continues with playgrounds and the McGuire Park splashpad opening June 15. Earlier this month, pools and the Mid County Regional Library opened and summer camps began at several locations. The Community Development Department's customer service area opened last week, but we encourage customers to continue to use online services to reduce the amount of in-person contact for the safety of our employees and the public.

We will be adding 1 p.m. citizen input on any subject to the June 23 County Commission meeting and discontinuing input via email. With the governor's Phase 2 guidelines increasing allowable gatherings to 50, we have configured the commission chambers to accommodate the public. The meetings air on CC-TV (Comcast channel 20 and 97, CenturyLink Prism channel 96) and are livestreamed on Facebook ([www.Facebook.com/CharlotteCountyFlorida](http://www.Facebook.com/CharlotteCountyFlorida)).

### **CharCoCares**

The Charlotte County Emergency Management Office has established the CharCoCares text messaging system to provide local updates related to COVID-19, disaster planning tips, area resources and opportunities as they become available.

Text CharCoCares to 888-777 to opt in. The service is free; message and data rates may apply.

### **Recovery builds**

The coronavirus pandemic undoubtedly had an impact on people in our community, both economically and emotionally. We're starting to see promising signs on the economic front, with new single-family home permits up 22% year-to-date. We resumed inspections in occupied homes last week, so the portion of the construction industry that offers repairs, replacements and renovations is picking up. Our application to the state to allow short-term rentals in time for the Memorial Day weekend gave a shot in the arm to the struggling tourism industry. The restaurant business is ramping up with Phase 2 restrictions loosened on indoor seating capacity, as well as a county resolution allowing restaurants to offer expanded outdoor dining in parking lots.

We're working with our state and federal lobbyists and lawmakers, along with the Florida Association of Counties and the Small County Coalition to ensure federal relief funding allocated by Congress reaches the hardest hit people in our community. To determine if you qualify for help, call 2-1-1 (residents in Englewood and other areas and TTY users call 941-205-2161). For information about employee and business assistance, visit [www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov), click the COVID-19 Information banner and then click Resources and Opportunities.

## **Storm prep**

The wind and rain we received last week from Tropical Storm Cristobal hundreds of miles away in the Gulf of Mexico is a stark reminder that we have to be prepared before a storm strikes. The 2020 Disaster Guide can help you prepare now, survive during, and be safe after a storm. Find the Guide online: [tinyurl.com/2020Disaster-Guide](https://tinyurl.com/2020Disaster-Guide). Here's a quick summary of what you should be doing or already completed as we enter the third week of the hurricane season:

Check up — evacuation plan, insurance policies, contact lists.

Zone up — visit [CharlotteCountyFL.gov](https://CharlotteCountyFL.gov) and click Know Your Zone under Popular Links.

Stock up — supplies, water, cash.

Clean up — potential projectiles in your yard.

Keep in mind that the coronavirus will limit the number of people we can accommodate in our four hurricane shelters due to required social distancing. Do not plan to evacuate to a public shelter as your first option. Make prior arrangements with friends or family outside the evacuation zone.

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