

Charlotte County Weekly Department Highlights

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Community Services

Charlotte Sports Park

The Charlotte Sports Park hosted the following Tampa Bay Rays Spring Training home games (attendance in parenthesis): Tuesday, March 25 – Boston Red Sox (5466), Wednesday, March 26 – Baltimore Orioles (3555). The last home game for the Tampa Bay Rays minor league operations took place on Sunday, March 30, on the back practice fields.

The Charlotte Sports Park was voted #1 for the best Spring Training Facility in USA TODAY's 10Best Readers' Choice contest.

Harold Avenue Recreation

Harold Avenue Recreation Center's Staff has used this week to begin preparation for its upcoming Summer Activities. Registration for the Summer Youth Basketball League is in full swing. The Youth Basketball League is one of Harold Avenue Recreation Center's most popular programs. The league is open to boys and girls ages 5-17 years of age. The Youth Basketball League consists of a ten regular season games and a postseason tournament for youth ages 9 and older. In addition, the staff is busy preparing for Summer Camp 2014. Art supplies, games, and recreation equipment have been ordered. The staff has been busy researching games and activities for the campers to experience this year. In other news, Tai Chi, Tae Kwon Do, Table Tennis, and Pickleball continue to remain steady.

Port Charlotte Beach and Recreation

The Promenaders continue to Dance the Thursday nights away! Approximately 95 people attended.

South County Regional Park

For the week of 3-23 through 3-29 South County Regional Park Pool had 141 paid admissions, 22 water aerobic participants and was visited by 111 pass holders. The Bluefin's held eight practices with approx 400 swimmers.

Staff, gardeners and volunteers completed a Garden Work Day at South County Community Garden on 3/29/14.

Extension Services

Newspaper Article for March 31 – "A flower with some power – the gardenia"

Managers Meeting – March 31 – Library

2014 Master Gardener Training– "Invasive Wildlife and Plants/ Weeds"- April 1

Master Gardener Association – April 2

All-Faculty Meeting – Polk County – April 3

2014 Master Gardener Training — "Why Landscapes Fail" – April 3rd – Master Gardener, Donna Worthley

Affirmative Action Reports are due – April 4

Florida Association of County Agricultural Agents Mid-Year Meeting – PolyCom – April 4

Hosting Charlotte/Desoto County Young Framers Association – our Offices – April 4

Facilities Construction & Maintenance

Repairs and Maintenance

The Board approved annual contracts for plumbing and general contracting services. This will enable work to process or emergency response on work orders that are beyond the immediate capacity of Facilities to respond.

The HVAC team has completed interviewing for the P.M. Tech position and has made a selection for this position. We are looking forward to welcoming the newest member of the HVAC division. Al Dantin is attending a "Chiller" class in Orlando to further his knowledge in chiller repairs.

Operations

Spring is here and Facilities will be sprucing up our grounds until we get an approval for a landscape contractor. This company will be responsible for the upkeep of our shrubbery, plantings, and plant bed care. This maintenance work has already begun around the Administration Building in Murdock and West County Administration Annex in Englewood. We will move systematically through the remaining locations until we have the contract for Landscape awarded.

Project Management

Facilities and the County Attorney's office continue to work on a lease with the Punta Gorda History Center for use of a portion of the Grace Street Annex. The PGHC wishes to develop an historical archive center that will focus on historical research, historical archiving, public education and enhanced preservation opportunities.

The Harbour Heights Parking and Drainage construction documents have been sent to purchasing to prepare a Request for Bids.

Sixty percent design completion documents have been received for the Port Charlotte Beach complex floating docks.

Human Services

David Rockow, Assistant Veteran Services Officer, along with members of the Port Charlotte Paratroopers posted the colors for the Douglas Jacobson VA Nursing Home which was celebrating its 10th year of caring for Charlotte County veterans. David also attended the Punta Gorda International Air Show and assisted in coordinating the military ground displays.

211 Supervisor, Dr. Faezeh Andrews, compiled Charlotte County's needs data for the Washington University of St. Louis per their request. Washington University is interested in the County's 211 Zip Code needs data in consideration of creating a statewide dashboard data for 211s.

Public Works

Active Construction Projects (may affect vehicular/boater/pedestrian traffic patterns)

2014 County Paving Program - This program provides for the resurfacing of roads in Greater Port Charlotte and the Road & Bridge Districts. 2014 paving maps are available on the public Web site.

Week of April 01, 2014: Sodding is underway on Midway Boulevard. The restoration on Veterans Boulevard, Toledo Blade Boulevard and Rio De Janeiro Avenue will begin this week. Milling and resurfacing is on-going on Sandhill Boulevard in Deep Creek and, weather permitting, should be complete by Friday, April 4, 2014.

Once the milling and resurfacing is complete on Sandhill Boulevard, the paving operation will move back into the Greater Port Charlotte District to finish base repairs and begin paving in the Olean 1 area; there is approximately 4,800 square yards of 6" base repairs that need to be completed in this area. To date, Ajax Paving has placed approximately 17,594 tons of asphalt in the Road and Bridge District, and 1,394 tons of asphalt in the Greater Port Charlotte District. The percentage of work completed on this contract is 19.58% and the percentage of time spent is 13.41%.

Dredging - Northwest Port Charlotte Waterways – This project will facilitate safe navigation by providing new access channels into the waterway system connecting to the Myakka River navigation channel. This is a

new channel, over one mile long, that extends and connects three waterways to the Myakka River channel. This project consists of design, engineering, permitting and construction of the new channel.

The contractor is dredging the mouths of the Venus and Cheshire waterways. Heavy rain conditions over the summer, early winter tides and cold fronts have hampered progress. The contractor requested and was granted a time extension; the revised contract end date was March 31, 2014. The Contractor (Marine Contracting Group) will be in liquidated damages starting April 1, and is doing everything they can to complete the project as quickly as possible.

Dredging – Suncoast Waterway – This project is designed to facilitate safe navigation within the Suncoast Waterway system by removing 18,000 cubic yards of silted material.

The contractor completed all of the public dredging for this project; they are not going to dredge the outer channel to the over-dredge tolerance. A reduction of quantities will be applied to their final billings. The Contractor is in the process of cleaning up the last of the project and the Notice of Substantial Completion was issued. The Consultant is in the process of compiling the as-built information and project certifications. Marine Contracting Group is working to restore the spoil site and close all permits.

Sidewalks - Rotonda Boulevards East & North - Three sidewalks are being funded through the Rotonda MSBU. Sidewalks will be installed from Parade Circle to Rotonda Circle on Rotonda Boulevard East, Rotonda Boulevard North and Rotonda Boulevard West.

The contractor completed all concrete work, ditch regrading, and sodding on Rotonda Boulevard North. Striping operations on Rotonda Boulevard North will continue this week. Construction continues on Rotonda Boulevard East; approximately 1,200 linear feet of sidewalk and 13 driveways have been poured. The recent heavy rains slowed the work down; crews are trying to dry things out to continue pouring.

U.S. 41 Microtunnels / Weirs – This project involves engineering and permitting for the directional drilling of culverts under U.S. 41 at the Fordham, Elkcarn, and Pompano Waterways, replacement of culverts at the North and South U.S. 41 Access Roads, within the Pompano Waterway, replacement of a stand-alone weir across the Elkcarn Waterway, north of the U.S. 41 Access Road, and replacement of a stand-alone weir across the Fordham Waterway, north of the U.S. 41 Access Road. The U.S. 41 Access Roads at the Pompano Waterway were closed to traffic the week of January 6, 2014.

Week ending March 29, 2014: Huxted Tunneling started the first Microtunnel Project in County History on Monday, March 24, 2014. On Friday March 28th, the tunneling machine came out the other side on target under U.S. 41 at the Pompano Waterway. Zep Construction completed the placement of 60 inch reinforced concrete pipe (RCP) under the southbound Access Road and is constructing the new weir on the northbound side. Zep Construction is mobilizing equipment to the Elkcarn Waterway to begin the preparation procedures for the second boring pit this coming week. 168 linear feet of 60 inch concrete boring pipe was installed at the project site this week.

Winchester Boulevard South Extension – This project includes the construction of a new four-lane connector from Placida Road to the Charlotte/Sarasota County line, with a direct connection to I-75 via River Road within Sarasota County. As construction progresses, the final design and permitting of the intersection of SR 776/Winchester will occur and the intersection improvements will be rolled into this project. Construction will continue through the summer of 2015.

Clearing and grubbing continues throughout the entire project. Storm drain installation is underway on the southern end of the project and is moving northward. Excavation of a stormwater pond is underway at Sunset Road. The material excavated from this pond is being utilized as embankment to cross an existing pond further south in the project.

We have received many inquiries about work taking place NORTH of State Road 776; the contractor is in the area clearing and grubbing. This area will be utilized as a flood plain compensation site similar to the site that exists adjacent to Winchester Boulevard North. This flood plain compensation site is required to balance the fill that was placed within the Oyster Creek / Gondolier Waterway flood plain to build Winchester Boulevard.

Negotiations continue with the design consultant for a scope and fee modifying the plans at the Winchester Boulevard North/SR 776 intersection to include a right turn lane onto Winchester Boulevard North.

Construction Projects in Design or Negotiation

C.R. 771 (Gasparilla Road) Widening – The purpose of this project is to widen C.R. 771 (Gasparilla Road) to a four-lane divided roadway, from S.R. 776 to the vicinity of Rotonda Boulevard East. The project will include the installation of sidewalks and bicycle facilities.

Halfacre Construction staff met with County staff on March 31, 2014 to discuss and finalize the Guaranteed Maximum Price. The Charlotte County Real Estate Services Department is currently working on Right of Way acquisitions which must be acquired prior to construction for utility relocations. Construction is projected to begin in the summer of 2014.

Midway Boulevard Widening Phase Two – This project will complete the widening of Midway Boulevard between Sharpe Street and Kings Highway. Downstream stormwater improvements must be made before widening this section of the corridor. This project includes increasing the drainage capacity under US 41 at three locations in addition to the widening of Midway Boulevard from Sharpe Street to Kings Highway. The first phase of the project was completed under project c419005.

Giffels-Webster Engineering will submit the 100% roadway design plans by the end of April 2014 for County staff to review. Charlotte County Real Estate Services is currently working on all Temporary Construction Easements needed for construction. Construction is estimated to begin in the fall of 2014.

Coastal Projects

Alligator Creek Maintenance Dredging c390502 – The MSBU Committee requested that engineering services be sought to engineer, permit, construct and manage the removal of silt to existing permitted conditions and pursue seeking permits to increase the depth of the access/main channel to -6 feet Mean Low Water (MLW). If maintained to existing conditions (-5 feet MLW), the approximate volume of material to be removed is about 3,000 cubic yards.

The Army Corps of Engineer (ACOE) permits expire March 2014; re-authorization of project permits is underway. Plans and specifications are complete pending any revised permit language required by agencies. The FDEP (State) permit was received and the permit application is still under review by the ACOE (Federal Gov't). Construction is projected to begin in the summer of 2014. The bid specifications are being drafted for review.

Gulf Cove Waterway Maintenance Dredging - Maintenance dredging provides continued safe navigation for citizens who utilize the waterways. This project provides for engineering, design and permitting to dredge the lateral/access channels and 100 feet into the interior canals. The amount of material to be removed will be determined as engineering and design progresses.

A Request for Letters of Interest was submitted to the Purchasing Department to begin the process of obtaining a qualified engineering firm. The letters are due back in April and review/selection will take place upon receipt. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

Harbor Heights Waterway Maintenance Dredging - This project consists of maintenance dredging existing man-made canals and access channels to their permitted conditions to restore safe navigation within the waterway system.

The Consultant is in the process of gathering survey and permitting data; this phase should be complete with submittal to the permitting agencies in early April 2014. Staff reviewed the 80% design plans with the consultant (Stantec) and permitting strategies were discussed. These strategies should lead to a streamlined process.

Manchester Waterway Maintenance Dredging - Maintenance dredging will be conducted in the Manchester, Ackerman and Hyattsville Waterways to provide safe navigation to the citizens who utilize the waterways. This project is located within Gasparilla Sound - Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserve.

The FDEP and ACOE permits were issued. The Consultant and County staff were successful resolving permitting delays with the ACOE. This project is advertised for bid; the pre-bid conference is scheduled April 9, 2014 with the bid opening scheduled for April 30, 2014.

Pirate Harbor Access Channel – Dredging provides safe navigation for citizens who utilize the waterways. This project provides for engineering, design and permitting to dredge 2,300 feet of access channel that was not covered under previous permitting. The amount of material to be removed will be determined as engineering and design progresses. This project was recommended and approved by the Pirate Harbor Waterway Advisory Committee.

Now that the Pirate Harbor rock ledges have been removed, staff is in the process of adding the engineering and design of the Pirate Harbor Access Channel to the previous contract. This project was originally presented to FDEP in 2003/04 however at that time FDEP did not view this project as favorable and it was removed from the original contract. Recently it was determined that dredging the Pirate Harbor Access Channel may be viewed (by the permitting agencies) as "acceptable" and will require a standard general permit to dredge 2,300 feet of the access channel. A change order is in process that will allow Coastal Engineering Consultants to continue their work on this project with a new permit application. If the change order is approved, this task will be placed back on their contract. Design/permitting is projected to be complete in May 2015.

South Gulf Cove Turn Basin – The South Gulf Cove Waterway Committee requests to permit a turn basin outside the lock complex to aid boaters in holding position while the lock is in use. From outside the lock, the only existing location for vessels, with any substantial size and draft, to hold position is in the channel. Due to the channel width, this poses a potential hazard notably during high winds or seas. The creation of a turn basin will aid boaters by providing sufficient space to hold position until the lock is free of other vessels.

A location was accepted as the spoil disposal site that will substantially reduce the cost of hauling material. The permit application was submitted to the regulatory agencies and the FDEP permit was issued, however the application is still under review by the ACOE. Due to the volume being dredged, the ACOE must seek approval from National Marine Fisheries (NMF.) The Consultants are making every attempt to work with ACOE and NMF to expedite the process. Johnson Engineering completed the construction plans and is in the process of drafting the bid specifications.

Maintenance & Operations

Week Ending April 1, 2014: Throughout the County last week, drainage crews completed a little over 35,250 square feet on line and grade. Line and grade is a phrase used to describe how roadside swales are cleaned out with heavy equipment. This work is never ending and is critical to ensure that water flows towards the proper outfalls.

Crews also completed over two miles of shoulder repair. This work provides for a safe recovery area off of the paved portion or "shoulder" of the road in the event a car veers outside of the travel way. This work not only serves to make the roads safer, but also protects our paved surfaces. If water is allowed to lie next to the road or on the road shoulder it will deteriorate the road and underlying base, greatly reducing the road's useful lifespan.

Crews in Rotonda also extended a forty-eight inch corrugated aluminum pipe into a canal where, in the past, there was a recurring erosion issue.

Tourism

Earned editorial coverage promoting Charlotte County as a tourism destination assists the Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau in stretching its marketing dollars. Guiding members of the media assists them in crafting a story to share with their readers. Hosting and coordinating media visits is dependent on support from the local tourism community who provide complimentary and discounted services. In February, the Bureau hosted a husband and wife writing team during a guided visit. He is a science writer and she is a travel writer. Since their visit, articles about the James & Barbara Moore Observatory at Edison State College's Charlotte Campus have appeared in several media outlets including www.Canada.com, www.VancouverSun.com and www.montrealgazette.com. Her "The Thrifty Traveler" column about visiting the destination has been distributed through the McClatchy-Tribune News Service which publishes 30 daily newspapers. The column has already appeared in the print and electronic editions of News Observer (Raleigh, N.C.), Chicago Tribune, and Sacramento Bee and we're confident it will appear in other outlets.

Myscha's article:

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/travel/sns-mct-bc-thriftytraveler-20140331,0,6868805.story>

David's article:

<http://o.canada.com/technology/space/visiting-the-charlotte-campus-observatory-near-punta-gorda-florida/>