

Administrator's Update for 5/15/2009

By Roger Baltz

Our County Commissioners recently met with the City of Punta Gorda Council and the Charlotte County School Board in a joint meeting. These joint meetings are designed to address issues that the three organizations have in common. At this joint meeting presentations included updates on 2008 DRC (Development Review Committee) approvals, permitting, land use changes, and school concurrency. There was also discussion about traffic problems in Punta Gorda. As a result, our Public Works Department was directed to install a four way stop at the intersection of Taylor Road and Cooper Street. The requested changes were quickly made in the field and appear to be operating well.

Our Facilities staff has been moving forward with mitigation upgrade work for on Fire stations #2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 13 and 14. This project was funded 75% by FEMA grant dollars. We are also putting together a plan to convert all county lift stations into Florida-Friendly landscape, which will also significantly lower landscape maintenance costs on a yearly basis.

Building Construction Services staff members gave a presentation to residents in El Jobean. Topics included code enforcement process, new grass ordinance, permitting process, importance of hiring licensed contractors. Our County can provide speakers to community groups on a variety of topics; just visit CharlotteCountyFL.com and click on Speakers Bureau.

Charlotte County hosted a successful Redfish Cup & Festival May 1–3 at Laishley Park. Attendance was 6,500 and event goers enjoyed favorites as the cardboard boat races, Splash Dogs competition, the Relatively Redfish Art Show and the dramatic daily redfish weigh-ins. The Redfish Cup was filmed for ESPN2 and will air on July 4 and July 11 at 8:30 a.m.

Our County Sea Grant staff coordinated a third year of redfish tagging in conjunction with the Kids Cup Redfish Tournament. Working in partnership with Mote Marine Laboratory, Progress Energy, the University of Florida/IFAS and the tournament, this project seeks to evaluate the fate of tournament caught and released redfish. 113 kids (ages 10-16) participated in the tournament.

Our County Human Services staff members have been working with Charlotte Behavioral Health Care in providing Crisis Intervention Training to officers from the Sheriff's Department. This training is designed to assist officers in achieving positive resolutions in crisis situations involving individuals with mental health issues.

The Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center has been scheduling its first season of graduation ceremonies. Edison State College Graduation consisted of over 100 graduates receiving their diplomas, with over 750 people in attendance. The Event Center also hosted the Charlotte High School Prom. Nearly 500 students attended the dinner dance.

Our County Fire/EMS Critical Incident Stress Management Team just completed their training requirement in Collier County. This training was paid for by a Training Grant. This Team provides personal debriefing and professional counseling services to personnel who experience highly traumatic events during daily operations.

The Murdock campus got a little greener last week as staff from Growth Management teamed up to plant several new native trees. The trees were provided by grant money through the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP). The planting also coincided with Earth Day and will include a marker. Getting the trees into the ground just prior to the onset of the rainy season will give them a good chance to survive.