

Administrator's Update for 5/29/09

By Roger Baltz

Our Greater Charlotte County Lighting District has replaced 50 capacitors in the streetlights along US 17 providing improved lighting for motorists and pedestrians. During a recent inspection, Lighting District personnel noticed that streetlights were dimming and not providing the appropriate illumination of the roadway. Circuits were checked for faults and it was determined that the electrical capacitors holding the energy charge had diminished over time thereby not providing the specified illumination. Upon replacement, the streetlights are now operating within specifications.

Our Public Works Department project for Northwest Port Charlotte Bridge Rehabilitation has continued to progress. This is the renovation of the Eisenhower Drive Bridge over the Cheshire Waterway and the Jacobs Street Bridge over the Jupiter Waterway. Construction on Eisenhower Bridge started on January 26, 2009, and was opened to traffic on March 27, 2009. On the Jacobs Street Bridge, precast beams were set on April 28, 2009, concrete deck was poured on May 11, 2009, and 160 liner feet of sidewalk was poured on May 18, 2009. The bridge should be open to traffic in approximately three weeks.

Our Utilities (CCU) staff is continuing conservation efforts. Our toilet rebate program, cooperatively funded with SWFWMD's Peace River Basin Board was launched in 2008. The program was to encourage the replacement of older, high-consumption toilets manufactured prior to 1994, using 3.5 gallons or greater of water per flush, with new low-flow models that only use 1.6 gallons or less of water per flush. Our Goal is to replace 700 Toilets this year and, so far, we have replaced 429 older toilets for a total calculated water savings of 338,682.5 gallons per year, at a cost of \$37,219.55 . If we meet our goal of replacing 700 older toilets, our calculated water savings will be 523,775 gallons per year. That's enough water for one household to use for 6.4 years!

Representatives from Charlotte County, including the Board of County Commissioners and Utilities personnel, attended a dedication ceremony to celebrate substantial completion of the new 6 billion gallon reservoir and plant expansion of the Peace River/Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority (PR/MRWSA). PR/MRWSA provides the bulk of the water to Charlotte County Utilities for distribution to our residents.

Charlotte County entered into a master water supply contract which states that we will fund just over 27% of the costs of the project. Once complete, Charlotte County will have a water allocation which will phase up to 16.1 mgd from the Water Authority.

Our Facilities Department has begun using community service workers for a number of tasks such as painting, miscellaneous office projects, and vehicle maintenance. These workers are individuals who have been sentenced to do

community service thru the court system. This is one of the County's strategies to reduce costs and create efficiencies.

This week, Growth Management conducted the final Smart Charlotte 2050 public workshops. The next step is to incorporate the public comments into the comprehensive plan and then move forward to share the results with the Commission. The public can continue to follow the process by accessing the documents at CharlotteCountyFL.com and clicking on the Smart Charlotte link.

The Family Services Center hosted the spring 2009 Paint Your Heart Out event. Volunteers worked to provide a fresh coat of paint and Master Gardeners performed the landscaping for two houses in the neighborhood revitalization area in Port Charlotte. All program expenses were covered through the contributions of local businesses, organizations, churches and volunteers.

More than 800 students entered the 7th annual Keep Charlotte Beautiful Student Calendar Art Contest. Savana Hibbert, a senior at Lemon Bay High School, was selected as the overall winner. Her artwork will appear on the cover of the 2010 calendar and she will receive a \$250 college scholarship. First place and honorable mention winners from each grade level K-12 will also have their art featured in the calendar. The calendar art contest is an educational program of Keep Charlotte Beautiful to help to show the relationship of art and the environment to help promote long-term environmental stewardship.