

Administrator's Update

By Roger Baltz

The State of Florida Department of Health & Emergency Medical Services conducted an on-site inspection of the County's EMS System on August 26, 2009. Our system scored a 100% with no deficiencies. This is the third year our EMS system received a perfect score.

Our County Utilities Department (CCU) implemented the Integrated Voice Response System for customers on Sept. 1, 2009. Customers can now pay their bills through an automated computerized system via telephone with the push of a button. This new feature complements our other customer-friendly electronic methods of paying bills, such as EZ-Pay and Recurring Payment.

Our County Geographic Information Systems (GIS) section has added a Public Works project layer to the www.ccgis.com website. This layer can be used to view the location of various Public Works projects as well as obtain links to project description and status pages that are on our Public Works website.

Our County Commissioners approved an Interlocal Agreement between Charlotte County and the Charlotte County Industrial Development Authority (IDA). This agreement is intended to enhance our efforts in Economic Development. The IDA will continue to issue industrial development bonds, administer incentives programs, and work toward the development of real estate ready properties.

Charlotte County Extension held another Green Industries Best Management Practices (BMP) training in regards to the fertilizer ordinance at the East Port Environmental Campus. Participants increased their understanding of the local County Ordinance, as well as turf, irrigation, landscape and pesticide BMPs. After taking an end-of-class exam and receiving a 75% or higher score, each participant receives a Certificate of Completion showing that they are in compliance to properly apply fertilizer in Charlotte County.

Renovations at the Punta Gorda Library are proceeding on schedule for a September 15, 2009 reopening. New carpet is installed, shelving installation is underway and staff will begin returning materials to the shelves this week.

Oyster Creek Skate Park celebrated two years of operation by holding the Second Annual Birthday Bash. The all day event featured free admission, skate board demonstrations, refreshments, raffles and music. All raffle giveaways, food and drink were the result of sponsor donations. Oyster Creek Skate Park has 18,000 square feet of features that include an advanced bowl, intermediate bowl and a beginner "skate zone" area.

Our Human Services Department co-presented an elder depression screening program at the Annual Florida Council on Aging Conference in St. Petersburg. We began this

program March 1, 2009. To date, we are one of four counties embracing this evidence-based program that identifies depressive symptoms and implements strategies to alleviate depression in the elderly. The session was well received, sparking interest from many other areas of Florida.

Our County Tourism staff attended the Florida Outdoor Writers Association annual conference in Ocala, FL., and updated the more than 50 outdoor and travel writers about what's new in Charlotte County since 2008 when the event was held in Punta Gorda. Charlotte County Tourist Development Council member Capt. Ralph Allen was elected as the new president for the Florida Outdoor Writers Association and will serve a one-year term.

Even though rainfall for the month of August was three inches below average, causing the flow of the Peace River at Arcadia to be below the historical average, the river flows were enough to not only meet customer demands but also build up storage in the new reservoir and in the Aquifer Storage & Recovery (ASR) wells. We have noted that finished water quality has improved dramatically, and is expected to improve even more with the El Nino conditions predicted to develop in the equatorial Pacific Ocean this winter.