

Administrator's Update
By Roger Baltz

Our Building Construction Services staff hosted an "Ask the Building Department" series program "Foreclosed Homes - Before you buy!" The 45 attendees learned about expired permits, liens, and code violations. Additionally, nine contractors in attendance were able to register for access to the new Accela online permitting website.

The submissions of two Transportation Income Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant applications have been completed by our Economic Development Department. One application is for the Southwest Florida Intermodal and Logistics Center in the amount of \$36.5 million. The preparation of this application involved strong collaboration between various County Departments as well as the Seminole Gulf Railway, DeSoto County, Charlotte County Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Charlotte County Industrial Development Authority and Weiler Engineering. The other application is for the Harbor Walk in the Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency in the amount of \$5.9 million. Awards for these highly competitive grants will be announced no later than Feb. 17, 2010.

Tringali Recreation Center hosted the first Farmers Market of the season. A variety of agriculture and horticulture was on hand for visitors. Registration for vendors for the next Farmers Market has grown from 12 to 20. The Farmers Market is held every 2nd and 4th Friday from 8 a.m. to noon.

Our Veteran Services staff helped coordinate and participate in the second sponsored Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. The mission of the Honor Flight is to provide an all-expense paid trip for WWII Veterans and their guardians to visit the World War II Memorial to honor their service and their sacrifices for our country. The Southwest Florida Honor Flight program is run entirely by volunteers with no administrative overhead.

The Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center recently hosted the Florida Championship Wrestling match, with an attendance of 300, and the Filipino-American Society annual ball with an attendance of 240. Two Charlotte Stone Crabs games last week at the Charlotte Sports Park also had a total attendance estimated at 9,643 people.

The first Great Bay and Sound Scallop Search was recently held and our Sea Grant Extension Division, along with 114 volunteers, searched the waters of Lemon Bay and Gasparilla Sound for bay scallops. The goal of the event was to document the health and status of bay scallop populations in local waters. Volunteers participating in the search received survey equipment and instructions on survey methods. Thirty-three teams consisting of 30 boats and three groups

of canoes and kayaks surveyed the sea grass beds within assigned areas using standardize methods. Ninety-four scallops were documented during the event.

Our Emergency Management staff completed reviews of all Emergency Facility plans with the Emergency Planner reporting that all 34 have been submitted and approved as to form and content.

Facilities staff is testing Power Factor Optimizers to investigate whether there are substantial reductions in energy usage in buildings. The testing will continue to be ongoing with modifications to the technology for the foreseeable future. We are also exploring the possibility of using energy Efficiency Education Dashboards in at least one County facility. This is a graphical user interface that share's the buildings energy efficiencies, green features, carbon footprint, recycling procedures as well as county wide green initiatives.

Our Utilities staff is continuing to work with the PR/MRWSA (Water Authority) on the "Phase 1A Water Interconnect" that would provide a regional transmission pipeline from the City of Punta Gorda's Shell Creek Water Treatment Plant across the Peace River to the county's connecting terminus on Kings Highway. Engineering designs are almost 100% complete and several connection points have been identified by Charlotte County Utilities to boost pressures and flows throughout their distribution system on the north side of the river. This is a project which is being coordinated by the Water Authority and construction is expected to start in 2010.