

Administrator's Update for 11/13/09
By Roger Baltz

This past week I attended the Chamber of Southwest Florida forum to provide a presentation on the topic of Maintaining Quality of Service for Local Government in a Dynamic Economy. The forum was held at Edison College in Fort Myers and also included presentations from the Lee County Manager and the Collier County Senior Management and Budget Analyst.

Charlotte County has now filled the position of Energy Conservation Coordinator. This action is tied to our County organizational values of environmental stewardship and innovation. Our new Coordinator will play an important role in addressing our goal of decreasing our energy usage by 15% over the next three years. Behavioral as well as structural analysis and improvements designed to find energy efficiency will be a priority.

Our Building Construction Services Department (BCS) and Economic Development Office (EDO) held the first annual Green Futures Expo and Energy Options conference on Nov. 1 and 2. at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center in Punta Gorda. It is estimated that over 2500 people attended the event. There were 62 exhibitors from all over the world at the Expo and approximately 200 participants and speakers at the Conference. The two-day event put our County firmly on the map as the place to be in Southwest Florida for renewable energy. After the Expo the Economic Development Office hosted an evening reception for the speakers and sponsors, and on Tuesday several of the guest speakers and County staff were given a tour of FPL's DeSoto Next Generation Solar Energy Center.

Several County departments also contributed to the Green Futures Expo. Our Charlotte County UF/IFAS Extension Service staffed a booth with demonstrations and educational handouts concerning Florida-Friendly Landscaping as it relates to the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) Program. Special emphasis was placed on water conservation via rain barrels. In addition, educational materials were available to help residents develop their own FYN Yard using the Nine Principles of Florida-Friendly Landscaping. A hands-on workshop for youth was provided by our 4-H Agent, 4-H Leaders and 4-H Youth Members where participants could make a "Pillow-Pack" mini-garden and take it home. At our Charlotte County Library System booth, attendees browsed books on alternative energy and other green practices. Staff was on hand with a laptop to issue library cards and check out materials on the spot.

Progress continues on the Toledo Blade widening. All street luminaries have been installed and all final dressing has been completed in preparation for placing the final layer of asphalt on the roadway. Soon after the new asphalt is placed and the traffic striping is applied, the roadway will be opened to the full

four lanes of traffic. The completion date for the entire project, from US 41 to I-75, is December 17, 2009.

The Charlotte County History Collection online is now accessible from the County web site. The collection contains over 3,000 unique images depicting the County's history as well as cemetery records and other materials from the Charlotte County Genealogical Society's collection. The project is being funded by a three-year grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. You can view the collection by going to www.CharlotteCountyFL.com and selecting "History Collections Online."

As part of the National Community Planning Month in October, members of our Growth Management Department staff presented mini-workshops at Neil Armstrong Elementary, Liberty Elementary, Meadow Park Elementary and Port Charlotte High School. The mini-workshops engaged the students in talking about their neighborhoods and getting their feedback on what they would like to see changed in their neighborhood to improve their quality of life. Planning principles were introduced and the students participated in interactive exercises that included online computer games and creating a "mini-city" using boxes.

Thirty-seven homeless Veterans attended the 5th Annual Veterans Stand Down at our Charlotte County Family Services Center on Oct. 31. Two volunteer barbers provided their services, flu shots were given by the Health Department, meals were provided and vouchers for fishing licenses were issued. Many volunteers and community and veteran agencies participated in this annual event to provide services to the men and women who served their Country.

Our Human Services staff participated in the Paint Your Heart Out! Make a Difference Day on Saturday, Oct. 24. Two homes were painted in the Port Charlotte revitalization area near the Charlotte County Family Services Center on Gibraltar Drive. Nineteen volunteers participated in the semi-annual event. Volunteers provided painting and landscaping for the two homes. This project was a partnership between our Human Services and Environmental Services Departments and Senior Friendship Centers/Charlotte RSVP.