

Administrator's Update for 12/11/09
By Roger Baltz

Life-Saving Equipment

The Charlotte County Fire/EMS department has purchased 15 special cooling units for our Advanced Life Support units. The cooling units will now allow us to keep life saving cardiac drugs cold for post arrest and MI (myocardial infarctions) for Hypothermic therapy. They will also allow us to keep the paralyzing drugs cold for RSI (rapid sequence intubation) for trauma patients needing an emergency airway. These drugs have a much longer shelf life when kept cold, for example the drug Cardizem only lasts a month at room temperature but will have a shelf life of at least a year when kept cold. The cooling units are funded from a State EMS Grant available to us this year at no cost to the department.

Energy Workshop

The Board of County Commissioners (BCC) conducted a follow-up workshop to the Nov. 2 Energy Options Conference at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center. A few of the presenters from the Energy Options Conference spoke at the Workshop and a few others joined in via WebEx conferencing. The Commissioners and our State legislators discussed policy issues that surround renewable energy at the local level.

Transportation Planning

Revisions to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO's) 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Draft Scope of Services has received final approval from the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT. A Work Assignment Order was executed on Nov. 24, 2009, giving the MPO's consultant notice to proceed with the update of the LRTP. The LRTP identifies and plans for the area's most critical transportation needs.

Legislative Priorities for Human Services

Two members of our Human Services staff attended the Florida Association of Counties' (FAC) Health & Human Services Policy Committee meeting at the FAC Legislative Conference this week. The Committee selected three top priorities for this year: County health departments, Medicaid nursing home services, and homelessness.

For Medicaid nursing home services, the committee chose to oppose any increases to a county's mandated share of cost for Medicaid nursing home reimbursements to the state. Currently, counties pay \$55 per month per Medicaid patient bed to the State of Florida. Recent state proposed increases for a

county's share of cost raises the reimbursement rate from \$55.00 to \$209.00. This increase would cost Charlotte County over \$900,000 additionally per year.

In regards to homelessness, the committee supports legislation that streamlines current state statutes relating to homelessness, associated programs and funding processes. A task force has been created by the FAC to address this issue statewide. Charlotte County Housing Manager Bob Hebert has agreed to serve on a technical advisory committee representing less urban counties.

Charlotte Harbor CRA Improvements

Last month our Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Advisory Committee approved housing rehabilitation grants to improve the curb appeal of 13 more units within the Charlotte Harbor CRA. Three housing rehabilitation grants are now completed in the Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) area. The improvements to the three homes included replacement of a front door and a fresh coat of paint on each of the dwellings.

SMART Presentations

Two SMART program safety presentations were given to Villa San Carlos one and Villa San Carlos last week by our Charlotte County Fire/EMS Public Education Division. The SMART program (Smart Methods & Attitudes Regarding Travel) educates citizens on smart methods of driving, safe driving, and safe passenger travel while operating a motor vehicle.

Movie Activity

A Production crew has been filming the micro budget film "The Troubadour" in two areas of the County. The faith-based movie filmed scenes at the Port Charlotte Beach Park and in El Jobean. The Film Office facilitated permits, provided boat transportation and various other logistical assists in cooperation with the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department. Charlotte County benefits directly from the economic impact of film shoots when crews stay in local hotels, dine in local restaurants and utilize local services.