

Administrator's Update for publication 2/12/2010
By Roger Baltz

We have now completed construction of the Spring Lake bathrooms. These bathrooms will serve our Spring Lake park area which consists of a well used boat ramp, walking trail, and observation and fishing structures.

We have scheduled our annual Charlotte County Government Day for Saturday, Feb. 20 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Town Center Mall. Several County departments will be on hand with information regarding County operations and services.

Our Budget staff recently presented our Board of County Commissioners with an update regarding our stimulus funds application efforts. Our goal is to evaluate all federal stimulus funding opportunities. Typically, we first determine if the County is eligible to apply for specific opportunities. The next step is to determine the optimal project to submit for funding under each opportunity. We also partner with our lobbyists for understanding of which County projects present the greatest opportunities to obtain a grant award. After an application is prepared we present the project to our State and Federal legislative delegation. Our delegation has provided strong support for County applications. To date the County has received an excess of \$6M in stimulus funding.

Our Natural Resources staff has worked with the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Committee and local equestrian enthusiasts to produce a design for an equestrian trail at Prairie Creek Preserve. The trail is approximately three miles in length and should be open next month. The trail network is in place, and trail markers have been installed using fence posts that were removed from another preserve (for a cost savings). Staff will install an equestrian rule sign in the coming weeks.

Our County Commissioners have approved a contract for improvements to the El Jobean Boat Ramp. Funded by the Boater's Improvement Fund, the project will begin following the completion of a current dredging project. The improved boat ramp facility will include a new boat ramp lane, docks, and paved parking for 18 boat trailer spaces and four car spaces.

Our County has entered into an agreement with the Florida State Department of Environmental Protection to provide a ground level ozone monitoring station in Rotonda. The monitoring station will provide important air quality information that will assist DEP to provide important air quality information to protect the health and welfare of Charlotte County citizens and visitors as well as help to meet Federal EPA guidelines for air quality.

County Emergency Planner Lynn Stickley received word from the Florida Emergency Preparedness Association that she has qualified for the designation

of FAEM (Florida Associate Emergency Manager). This is a significant achievement that requires a minimum of two years of full-time experience and 75 hours of professional training, as well as contribution to the field of Emergency Management.

Dredging work has continued at several locations around our County. The Manchester North Maintenance Dredge Project is 97% complete. The contractor cleared some high spots left in the Flamingo North Waterway and is cleaning up the spoil sites. The remaining work is scheduled for completion by the end of the month. The Harbour Heights Maintenance Dredge is continuing in the Santa Clara, Dover, Santa Barbara, and San Marino Canals and in the Balboa Canal System. A temporary off-load site has been permitted and established for the Balboa and San Salvador Waterways. Dredging in Northwest Port Charlotte has resumed with work in the Bayshore Waterway, the last waterway in the contract requiring initial dredging.

Over 800 requests for tickets to the Big Read Kickoff Event featuring author Stephen King were received the first day the request form was available on the County website. The 400 free seats for the March 20 program at the Cultural Center will be awarded by a random drawing the week of Feb. 26. Requests are being received through www.CharlotteCountyFL.com (click the Big Read icon) until 5:00 p.m. on February 19. The event kicks off a six-week long series of programs focusing on the stories and poems of Edgar Allan Poe. The Big Read is funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.