

Administrator's Update for 4/7/10

By Roger Baltz

Commissioner Bob Starr, Commissioner Dick Loftus, Assistant Administrator Kelly Shoemaker, and I attended the ribbon cutting for the Toledo Blade Boulevard project. This project involved a partnership between the City of North Port and Charlotte County for funding the improvements.

Annual Report

Our County Annual Report is completed and is posted on our County website www.CharlotteCountyFL.com in the Publications heading.

Jail Expansion Progress

We have received the temporary certificate of occupancy for the final phase of the jail expansion project. This final phase adds 132,000 sq. ft. to the jail, including a significant increase in bed count (total of 448). Also included is an expanded transportation and sally port area, intake and release area, a new housing area for juvenile detention and special class inmates as well as additional appellate courtrooms. The project is expected to be 100% complete in the next several months as we continue to install furniture, fixtures and operating equipment, perform a comprehensive punchlist and closeout as well as commission the building and perform a final audit of the project.

Mapping Capabilities Expand

Using grant funding, our Emergency Management Office secured a GIS Mapping program that works side by side with our EOC Operations software "WebEOC." The mapping program, known as "Mapper Pro," is able to pull any address information coming into the Emergency Operations Center and locate, display, and label it on the latest maps supplied by our Charlotte County GIS office. Mapper will be able to give Emergency Managers, Public Safety officials, and County leaders immediate feedback on where problems exist and how to efficiently deploy resources. All information captured by both WebEOC and Mapper are stored in a database and are available when the County applies for any reimbursement from expenses incurred during incidents and events.

Economic Incentives Working Group

The first public meeting of the Economic Incentives Working Group was held on March 31. Local county officials, business representatives and citizens met to discuss ways to develop incentive programs for new and existing businesses, as well as strategic plans, and action items. The idea to form the Working Group occurred at the joint County Commission-City of Punta Gorda meeting in March.

The group will meet roughly every 10 days for its first three meetings to finalize strategic plans.

Google Efforts

Our Economic Development Office (EDO) has submitted Google's request for information (RFI) to compete to become one of the company's next test sites for its new ultra high-speed Internet. As part of the RFI, our EDO submitted a proposal that suggested Google use the 871-acre Murdock Village as an operations hub for its broadband initiative and rename it Google Technology Park. Although over 600 communities have applied, our EDO is hopeful that the proposal will catch Google's attention.

Green Building Program Notables

Our Building and Construction Services department hosted a class on the Florida Water Star Program. The class is a joint effort between the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and our Green Building Program to further promote sustainable practices and the preservation of the region's water resources. The program certifies that new home construction or retrofits are built to protect the environment and save money through efficient water use. Two experts from SWFWMD came to our Charlotte County facilities to train a diversified group that included government employees from Charlotte, Sarasota and Lee County, and the City of Fort Myers, as well as land developers, energy raters and local builders.

Box Culvert Set

The box culvert for the water control structure on the Lionheart Waterway has been successfully set. It crosses Forrest Nelson Boulevard behind the Mid-County Library. The road work over the box culvert will be completed before the roadway re-opens.

Frontier Days

The 14th annual Florida Frontier Days festival was held at Bayshore Live Oak Park on March 25 through 27. This annual event, sponsored by the Charlotte County Historical Center, the Historical Center Society and Charlotte Harbor Rotary, showcased frontier crafts, games, music and food.