

Administrator's Update

By Roger Baltz

Road and Traffic Improvements

The old bridge on the Aqui Esta Drive Roadway Improvements Project has been removed. Piles have been driven for the replacement bridge and the approaches are complete. Road construction continues between the bridge and Magdalena Drive.

Approximately 16 acres of land has been cleared between Airport Road and the Charlotte County Speedway for the Piper Road Widening Project. Over 2,000 CY of fill were used to raise the road base. Excavation for a large drainage canal adjacent to the roadway has started.

New LED signal displays were installed at the SR776/Bay Heights and SR776/Beach Road intersections. The LED displays were supplied by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

Medical Arts District

Our Growth Management Department, with support from AECOM Inc. and the architectural consulting firm Ellerbe Becket, is working to complete the final planning task for the Smart Charlotte 2050 Plan process. The team is facilitating formation of a public/private partnership that will result in a redevelopment plan for the area surrounding the two hospitals in Port Charlotte. Plans will focus on neighborhood revitalization as well as creating multi-modal and mixed use districts to support the economic vitality of the area. Of special interest will be policies supporting aging in place concepts; and the creation of an illustrated place-making design handbook. The first phase of the project should see completion by June, 2010.

Firewise

Charlotte County's Emergency Management Mitigation Planner accompanied the Florida Division of Forestry Mitigation Officer to Rotonda Heights at the invitation of their homeowners group. The discussion at the meeting covered the possibility of Rotonda Heights becoming a Firewise Community. The citizens were advised of what is required before a community can be considered for such a designation.

The National Firewise Communities Program is a multi-agency effort designed to reach beyond the fire service by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, and others in the effort to protect people, property, and natural resources from the risk of wildland fire before a fire starts. In Charlotte County, six neighborhoods have achieved Firewise status over the past five years.

History Online

Our Charlotte County Online History Collection had its busiest month since its launch last November, logging 262,804 hits during March. At this time, the scanning of Year 2 images is complete. Once loaded, these 9,000+ additional images will be available for viewing, including the diaries of Daniel Child whose writings chronicle the Murdock area in the early 20th century. A series of four postcards and four bookmarks publicizing the online history collection are available at Charlotte County libraries and the Historical Center. Each postcard and bookmark features a photograph from the collection.

Annual Events Draw Crowds

Our Charlotte County Historical Center (CCHC), the CCHC Society and the Charlotte Harbor Rotary Club worked together to present the 14th Annual Florida Frontier Days festival at the end of March at Bayshore Live Oak Park. This year's festival reached 2,204 citizens, including 929 students and 291 teachers and chaperones from 16 schools. Approximately 608 adults and 376 children not associated with a school also attended the event which showcased frontier crafts, games, music and food.

Our County its 46th annual Easter Egg Hunt early this month at the Charlotte County Sports Park. The event was open to area families with children ages birth to 9 years. At this year's event, approximately 850 participants enjoyed the egg hunt and walked the stadium's concourse to visit the 17 different vendors that were present. The vendors offered information to the families on how to live healthy, safe lifestyles.

ECEC

I attended the General Investors Luncheon in April for the Enterprise Charlotte Economic Council. Mike Curley of the Seminole Gulf Railway spoke to the group. Seminole Gulf Railway owns and operates over 100 miles of track in Florida from a connection with the national rail system at Arcadia between Naples, Bradenton and Sarasota. Although the railway is known for its popular Murder Mystery Dinner Train, Mr. Curley told investors that it is very diversified, shipping a variety of items from plastics to lumber, as well as becoming involved in car leasing. The Railway has greatly improved its fuel mileage and is now looking to develop higher speed rail.