

Administrator's Update for 1/30/13
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Construction updates

The construction contract for the Charlotte Harbor Watershed Management Stormwater Structures, awarded to Go Underground Utilities, LLC, provides for two stormwater control structure installations. One of these installations is at the intersection of Church Street and Bayshore Road, and another on Harper Avenue between Eaglet Road and Homewood Street. The preconstruction meeting was held Jan. 23, 2013 and construction is scheduled to begin Feb. 4. This project was funded through a cooperative funding agreement with the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) to develop a watershed management plan for the Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Area.

For the Rampart Boulevard improvement project, the contractor is currently working near the intersection of Kings Highway and Loveland Boulevard. The new west-bound lanes are now open and traffic has been shifted for the construction of the east-bound lanes. The intersection at Rampart and Kings Highway is scheduled to be completed by the end of January 2013, at which time all the lanes will align and the phase 1 of this project, Kings Highway to Loveland Boulevard, will open. Construction will then continue on Kings Highway to the Kings Gate entrance.

3rd Commander

Our assistant veteran services officer, David Rockow, was recently sworn in as the 3rd Commander of the Port Charlotte Chapter of the Paratrooper. The Port Charlotte Paratroopers meet at American Legion Post 110 on Harbor Boulevard in Port Charlotte on the third Wednesday of each month. Mr. Rockow's position will be held for two years. Mr. Rockow also recently spoke to approximately 68 attendees at the American Legion Post 103 in Punta Gorda about Veteran Affairs (VA) healthcare eligibility and service connected claims. Our veteran services division has two locations and can assist with claims, health care benefits, and many veteran programs. Call the office at 941.764.5579 for more information.

Reaching the in-state vacationers

Earlier this month staff members of the county tourism office attended the annual Travel Expo at The Villages, a residential area about two and a half hours north of our county. Preliminary estimates indicate approximately 6,000 residents attended this consumer show hunting for ideas and information relating to vacation travel within the state. Research conducted by show organizers revealed that the majority of this affluent market takes at least two in-state vacations each year, prefers to travel mid-week, and is interested in visiting natural attractions and the beaches. Charlotte Harbor and the Gulf Islands was well represented at the show as representatives from area accommodations and attractions participated with the tourism office. More than 800 of our visitor's guides were distributed. Staff and local industry reps fielded a variety of detailed questions about our destination while offering several vacation package options.

Kid's Safety Day

On Saturday, Jan. 19, Charlotte County community services department held the first Kid's Safety Day at The Tringali Recreation Center in Englewood. The day was filled with free events with the mission to bring awareness to the community about the importance of keeping our children safe. The event was well attended with approximately 250 people. The 27th Masonic District Child ID program furnished free laminated IDs and a CD containing the child's information, photo and digital fingerprints. The Florida Highway Patrol brought its rollover simulator and DUI goggles, and the Division of Forestry brought Smokey the Bear. The Charlotte County Sheriff's Office offered bike safety and registration. Our Charlotte County EMS staff set up a rescue display. Englewood Winn Dixie offered refreshments and the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the Englewood Fire Department had safety information for the children and parents.