

Administrator's Update for 3/12/14

By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Last Wednesday Cheney Brothers held a ribbon cutting and groundbreaking ceremony on the site for their new distribution center near the Punta Gorda airport. The event was well attended, with the list including Governor Rick Scott and the CEO of Cheney Bros. Byron Russell. Our Economic Development office assisted with the event. The distribution center has a tentative opening date in early 2015 and will bring hundreds of new jobs to our county.

Best spring training city

USAToday and 10Best are collecting votes for the "Best Spring Training City" and Port Charlotte is on the list. We are near the lead in this race to be the best; please help by voting! Voting is open now and ends on Monday, March 24 at 11:59 a.m. Vote at <http://www.10best.com/awards/travel/best-spring-training-facility/> or visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click the banner. Tell your friends and neighbors and help us be number 1!

NAB/Civil Citation program

Our family services division of human services facilitates the Neighborhood Accountability Board (NAB) and Civil Citation program. Over the past year 25 presentations were delivered to community organizations such as the Charlotte County Young Professionals, school administrators, organizations such as Big Brother/Big Sisters, Drug Free Charlotte County and Kiwanis International to name a few. Community awareness of the program has increased as shown by the recruitment of 24 new volunteers. These volunteers have stood up to make their community a better place to live and in turn helped mentor our future: our youth.

Referral numbers are growing, specifically in the area of Civil Citation. This is a significant accomplishment—a youth in our community who has committed their first misdemeanor offense is eligible for a civil citation issued by a law enforcement officer. The youth then has an opportunity to not only be a part of the restorative justice process within his or her community but they are spared an arrest record if they complete all the requirements of the Civil Citation program. Currently over 50 percent of the 42 cases currently being managed are Civil Citations compared to about 10 percent a year ago. Our community leaders and law enforcement professionals are engaged and making the process work when it is the right thing to do.

For more information on the program or volunteering for the NAB, visit the human services/family services web pages at www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov or call 941.833.6500.

Update on microtunnels & weirs

This project is designed to increase stormwater flow under U.S. 41 in conjunction with the Midway Boulevard Phase II road widening project. This project involves microtunneling culverts under U.S. 41 at the Fordham, Elkcam, and Pompano Waterways, and includes the replacement of existing culverts at the U.S. 41 access roads at the Pompano Waterway and Elmira Boulevard. In addition, stand-alone weirs will be replaced across the Elkcam Waterway and the Fordham Waterway, and a new weir will be constructed across the Pompano Waterway north of the U.S. 41 northbound access road. The project also includes many details such as sidewalks, major drainage improvements, Charlotte County Utility (CCU) relocations and improvements, street lighting, site dewatering, flow diversion, excavation and fill, grading, sodding, and maintenance of traffic.

Construction is underway at the Pompano Waterway. Crews are working on the retaining walls and 60-inch storm pipes that are being placed under the U.S. 41 northbound and southbound access roads and

are building the foundation for the water control structure (weir) upstream of the northbound access road. On the northbound side, the boring pits are currently being prepared to receive the tunnel boring machine head. The receiving pit on the southbound side is being prepared to receive the machine head after it passes under U.S. 41, where a crane will lift the equipment and return it to the boring pit in order to bore a second tunnel. Crews anticipate the boring process will begin the last week of March and this portion of the project should be finished by the end of May, 2014.

All businesses are open along the access road; signage is posted to help motorists navigate the area.