

Administrator's Update for 3/12/10

By Roger Baltz

Commissioners Bob Starr, Richard Loftus, Adam Cummings, Assistant County Administrator Kelly Shoemaker and I attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the Landfill Gas-To-Energy Project at the Zemel Road Landfill. This project will provide revenue from carbon credits, electric energy royalties, and renewable energy credit royalties. The credits and the energy are produced by collecting methane gas from deep in the landfill and burning it off or using it to produce electricity. The project is completely funded by Mas Energy, at no cost to the County, in return for a share of the revenue.

New Green Building Incentive

To promote green building practices, our Building Construction Services Department (BCS) has added a new incentive to the Green Building Program: Plans Examiner Julia Galofre will be serving as the certifying agent at no cost to the applicant. This service is offered to the first five applicants and is available for new or existing commercial and residential projects that are enrolled in the Charlotte County Green Building Program. The free certification is being done as a pilot initiative to ascertain the actual cost to see if it may be a viable option for the future.

Julia Galofre has recently been accredited by The Green Building Initiative (GBI) as the first person in Florida to be a Green Globes Professional. The GBI is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to accelerate the adoption of building practices that result in energy-efficient, healthier and environmentally sustainable buildings by promoting credible and practical green building approaches.

PACE

Our Economic Development staff participated in a teleconference call on the Property Assessed Clean Energy Program (PACE), which included Representative Steve Precourt, Chairman of the Energy and Utilities Policy Committee. The state is currently crafting the enabling legislation for a Florida PACE program. The PACE program calls for a city, county or other municipal entity to create a district to issue bonds to raise money to lend to property owners. Property owners who put solar or other green upgrades to their home or business would then be able to borrow money for the upgrade and pay off the loan over a period up to 20 years as a special assessment on property tax bills. Among other topics, our Charlotte County solar rooftop program was discussed.

Savings from Contracts

Our Facilities Department has rebid our building custodial contract as part of an ongoing cost reduction strategy with contracted services. The bidding environment continues to be favorable, and as a result the low bidder has come in at \$113,000 under the current contract with no reduction in services.

Fire/Rescue

Our County Fire/EMS staff have been working with the Little Gasparilla Island Fire Rescue. We have donated 1200 feet of five-inch rubber fire hose, along with several five-inch gate valves to help assist with supplying water to the island during fire emergencies from the Charlotte County Marine Fire Boat.

Roads and Bridges

Our Real Estate Services section is working with engineering staff from Public Works and Southwest Engineering and Design on the Edgewater Phase 2 project. Several hundred real estate interests will need to be acquired including land for pond sites, traffic circles, bridges and temporary construction easements.

The contractor for the Coral Creek Bridge Replacement Project placed concrete for the approach slab at the CR 771 side of the structure and has begun placing concrete for the sidewalk and final grading from CR 775/Boca Grande Causeway to the bridge. The project is 74 percent complete with all work scheduled for completion by Oct. 2010.

Library Account Collections

In Nov. 2008 our Charlotte County Library System began using Unique Management Services, a company specializing in library account collections, to assist with the collection of overdue accounts. This outsourcing has resulted in a return rate of two and half times the investment. In the past 14 months over \$47,000 in overdue fines and materials has been recovered.