

**Administrator's Update for 7/21/10**  
**By Roger Baltz**

Commissioner Starr, County Attorney Janette Knowlton, and I travelled to the British Petroleum (BP) claims center in Naples. The purpose of our trip was to introduce ourselves to the BP representatives and provide information to them about our County. We also discussed, in detail, the claims process which has been established for local governments.

Public Works Director Bob Halfhill and Chuck Mopps recently provided the County Commissioners with a summary of our County Waterway Maintenance Program. This program was implemented in 2001 and coordinates canal dredging activities for roughly 169 miles of canals throughout our County. Fourteen waterway Municipal Service Benefit Units (MSBUs) provide funds for the program.

County Commissioners held a workshop to discuss the recommendations of the Economic Development Working Group with regard to incentives. The Board of County Commissioners (BCC) provided input and support regarding several of the suggestions. These included use of land swaps, alternative payment options for impact fees, ad valorem tax abatement options, speculative buildings and rent subsidies provided a return on investment (ROI) could be demonstrated. The BCC also authorized continuing to pursue the Sports and Entertainment District in Murdock Village and agreed that appraisals should be obtained for the properties.

A Letter of Approval has been received from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) stating that Charlotte County is now considered a part of the Palm Beach EB-5 Regional Center's extended geographic area. The letter also pre-approves thirteen business categories. The EB-5 is a vehicle established to promote the influx of foreign capital, both financial and intellectual. Inclusion in this program is intended to put Charlotte County in a much more competitive position to promote economic growth, development, tax base, and job creation via the attraction of direct foreign investment.

Our Charlotte County Fire and EMS operations, with funding through a grant from Homeland Security, has purchased advanced chemical identification equipment: Ahura Scientifics' First Defender and TruDefender FT. First Defender is used worldwide by first responder, military, law enforcement and forensic chemistry personnel to rapidly, accurately identify unknown chemicals in seconds. The purchase for the First Defender and the TruDefender FT was provided for in the 2008/2009 State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) and totaled \$65,000 for the equipment and equipment specific training.

Facilities Construction and Maintenance staff are continuing with the Energy Efficiency Program. All T12 lighting fixture ballasts have been swapped with

more energy efficient T8 ballasts and T8 bulbs. Timers are being installed throughout our facilities on hot water tanks and drinking fountains. More energy efficient HVAC thermostats are replacing the non efficient thermostats. New HVAC building controls are now monitoring the large chillers for the larger buildings which should result in significant reductions in our electric bills.

County Commissioners have approved the 2009 International Property Maintenance Code. Adoption of this code ensures that Charlotte County is using the most up to date enforcement mechanisms that are fully compatible with the Florida Building Codes. These codes allow us to ensure that existing homes are maintained in a safe and hygienic way, and allow us to take action to require compliance with these codes.

Commissioners approved the process to loan the multi-family housing developer, Carlisle Development Group, LLC, Hurricane Housing Recovery (HHR) Program funds in the amount of \$2,145,226 to build the affordable housing complex called Charlotte Crossing in the Deep Creek area of the County. This complex is the last of the originally approved projects from the \$19 million received by Charlotte County from the State of Florida after Hurricane Charley. The apartment complex will provide 82 rental units to seniors 55 years of age and older who meet established income guidelines.