

Administrator's Update for 7/28/10
By Roger Baltz

Commissioners Richard Loftus, Tricia Duffy and Adam Cummings, along with Assistant County Administrators Kelly Shoemaker and Ray Sandrock and I attended the opening of the Charlotte County Jail Expansion on Airport Road. This project began in 2005 with a needs assessment. The entire project budget was just over \$45 million. Funding was provided from impact fees and ad valorem revenues.

The jail expansion included video visitation, a more efficient intake area and expanded the bed count from 528 to almost 1,000. Commissioner Loftus spoke at the opening, which included a ribbon-cutting ceremony and tours of the facility.

Last week the Board of County Commissioners approved the Smart Charlotte 2050 Comprehensive Plan, which the County has been working on for two years. The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) had issued 33 objections to the proposed comprehensive plan in early March and since then we have been working to address each objection to the satisfaction of the DCA. After many meetings and phone conferences with the DCA, it appeared that the Growth Management staff satisfactorily addressed all objections and prepared the item to go to the Board for adoption. We anticipate receiving notice from the DCA on our compliance with State Statutes within the next 55 days.

Our Building Construction Services (BCS) staff has received the results from the recent Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) review. Our classification improved from our last review in spite of the fact that we are working with less people and doing fewer plan reviews and inspections. BCEGS assesses the building codes in effect in a our community as well as how the community enforces them, with special emphasis on building code requirements designed to mitigate losses from natural hazards. Similar to the Community Rating System (CRS) review for flood hazard mitigation, BCEGS focuses on other types of natural disasters. Residents and business owners may be eligible for insurance discounts based on the rating received from this review. Charlotte County has one of the highest ratings in the state and is above average in most categories.

The American Red Cross of Charlotte County has partnered with our Fire/EMS division and installed collection boxes at fire stations throughout Charlotte County. These drop boxes are for the collection of clothing, shoes, and small appliances which will be picked up three times a week. The proceeds from the donations will go to help victims of disasters, house fires and family's in need within our community.

Coral Creek Bridge Replacement has continued. The new bridge was opened to traffic on June 7, 2010. Utility and roadway drainage work, which could not be

finished until traffic was moved to the new bridge, is being completed. About half the demolition of the old bridge is complete. Next week, the contractor will begin barging suitable material from the bridge demolition to the Tremblay Reef in the Gulf of Mexico. The material will be used to expand this artificial reef.

Our County Commissioners have approved a question regarding tax abatement to be placed on the August 24, 2010 ballot. Information on this topic can be found at the EDO's website, www.FloridaEDO.com or the County website at www.CharlotteCountyFL.com.

Our Charlotte County Historical Center received a donation of a painting by Highwayman artist Willie Daniels. The painting was purchased from the artist in the 1980s by the cousin of the donor. The painting joins the extensive collection of art and artifacts at the Historical Center on Bayshore Road in Port Charlotte.