

Administrator's Update for 9/22/10
By Raymond J. Sandrock, Interim County Administrator

On Sept. 15 I was honored to be the guest speaker at the Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce Third Wednesday Coffee. I was extremely impressed with how actively the business community supports the Chamber. I took the opportunity to discuss County re-organization opportunities, which are being set forward to improve service levels and efficiencies. I also discussed how we are focusing on evaluating processes in our newly-consolidated Building and Growth Management Department, and that we are approaching the final selection process to fill the Director positions in Tourism and Economic Development.

We are currently finalizing a land swap agreement related to a portion of the Murdock Village property with Bruce Laishley and Rick Treworgy of Southwest Land Developers. We believe this will be an incredible opportunity to work together with these successful local business interests with the outcome to jump start development and create new jobs. The Murdock Village Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Advisory Committee met on Sept. 13 and unanimously endorsed the proposed land swap between Southwest Land Developers and the Murdock Village CRA.

Southwest Land Developers hosted Wilderness Resorts to Charlotte County during the week of Sept. 6 through 10. Wilderness Resorts is considering developing a water park resort in Charlotte County. I would like to state personally how impressed I was regarding the welcoming efforts coordinated by Southwest Land Developers and due to those efforts I believe we have developed initial relationships that will set the stage for positive results. The Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners has set Economic Development and creating new jobs as a top priority.

Last week the Board of County Commissioners held a public hearing on the budget. The final public hearing on the budget is scheduled for September 29 at 5:01 p.m. in Room 119, 18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte. This year ends the fourth consecutive year of dealing with revenue reductions associated with property devaluations. We are hopeful that stabilization is near.

Our Charlotte County Fire/EMS will be supporting the American Cancer Society National Movement called the Pink Heals Tour 2010. This tour consists of pink fire trucks that have been touring the Country in their fight against breast cancer. They will be in Charlotte County on Sept. 27, 2010 at two different locations, Fisherman's Village in Punta Gorda from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and the Town Center Mall in Port Charlotte from noon to 2:15 p.m. On October 25, 26 and 27, to support the "Cares Enough to Wear Pink" National Movement, Charlotte County Fire/EMS personnel will be wearing pink duty tee shirts to show their support in the fight against breast cancer.

Last week our Building and Growth Management Department received an award of merit from the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association in the "Best Practices" category for the newly-adopted comprehensive plan, Smart Charlotte 2050. This is the second state level award the Plan has received, the other coming from the Florida Planning and Zoning Association (FPZA) in 2009.

The old Coral Creek Bridge was dismantled last month and barged out into the Gulf, next to the Tremblay Reef. The concrete will create a new Artificial Reef. This addition will give fishers and divers another location to use and alleviates congestion at the Tremblay Reef. Over 1,450 tons of manicured concrete was placed on this reef site. The location is northwest of the center material and at 26°48.437N and 82° 22.806W.

Congratulations to the Charlotte Stone Crabs on their South Division Championship for the second year in a row. The game attendance for the Stone Crabs games at our Charlotte Sports Park leads the league for the second year in a row at over 173,000 spectators so far for 2010.

Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau advertising to date has generated more than 41,000 requests for information about our area. This total reflects an increase of 12 percent over that of 2009. A recent inquiry-conversion study revealed that of those who requested the official Visitor Guide, 40 percent actually visited and 13 percent planned to visit. Of those respondents who actually visited, 47percent were first time visitors. While it is always important to maintain our customer base, it is equally important to attract new visitors. These survey results are considered superior by tourism industry standards.