

Administrator's Update for 2/2/11
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

The Manasota Key phase of the Stump Pass dredge and beach renourishment project is mostly complete, with tilling the beach the final step. Sand is currently being placed on Knight Island, on the south side of the pass. Work is also being done at the north end of Palm Island, including the development of a shorebird nesting habitat.

CRA maintenance

The Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) lot maintenance program is underway. A contractor has been hired and has started clearing invasive non-native vegetation from vacant property within the historic neighborhood of the Charlotte Harbor CRA adjacent to the Bayshore Live Oak Park. To date, ten private property owners have agreed to participate in the program. The goal of the program is to improve the appearance of the neighborhood as well as removing areas that may be a hazard to health and safety to the residents.

Score tower

Our facilities construction and maintenance crews have successfully removed the top portion of the Carmalita field #3 score tower, destroyed in Hurricane Charley, and moved all electrical components from the existing building location over to a central electrical yard with functional field light switches and programmable satellite control systems. We anticipated the electrical needs for a future concession building to be tied into this new electrical system. The remaining lower portion of the building will remain for storage purposes until the new concession building is built, at which time the old block storage building will be removed.

Construction of the extension of the Cape Haze Pioneer Trail is under way and our facilities construction and maintenance representatives continue to coordinate with FDOT project managers on the project. With an opening date in early summer of 2011, the trail extension will add 2.25 miles to the existing 5.5 mile trail and include a 300 foot bridge across Coral Creek.

CAAAB

The Community Action Agency Advisory Board (CAAAB) met recently and provisionally approved the draft Community Action Plan for 2011-2015. The plan outlines six national goals that the Charlotte County human services department will focus on during the upcoming five-year period. The plan is expected to be presented to the Board of County Commissioners for approval within the next 30-45 days prior to its submission to the state department of community affairs. The CAAAB is required by federal guidelines for Community Services Block Grants and also serves to coordinate community resources to enable low-income persons to become self-sufficient.

Grant offsets Tourism expense

The Florida Sports Foundation recently awarded our Charlotte Harbor Visitor and Convention Bureau with a \$10,000 grant to help offset expenses of the 2011 Snowbird

Baseball Classic, to be held Feb. 18 to March 27. More than two dozen collegiate schools will compete with the highlight being the 3 p.m. game on Feb. 25 between Ohio State and Western Michigan at the Charlotte Sports Park. Admission is free and open to the public. The 2010 tournament generated more than \$3.1 million in direct spending and more than 9,300 hotel room nights for Charlotte County.

Entrepreneurial discussion

Coming up in February, the Charlotte County economic development office is sponsoring a presentation and round table discussion entitled "Growing an Entrepreneurial Support Organization in Charlotte County" facilitated by Mark Lange, Executive Director, and Penny Lewandowski, Director, Entrepreneurship Development, of the Edward Lowe Foundation. This event will take place on Wednesday, Feb. 16 from 8:45 to 10:15 a.m. at the Charlotte Harbor Event Center, 75 Taylor Street, Punta Gorda and is open to the public. The presentation will include information on fostering a collaborative culture where entrepreneurs can grow and succeed and why that growth is vital to a local economy. The program will include proven practices and examples of how other communities have been successful in nurturing the entrepreneurial community. Information will also be provided on the annual award program, Florida Companies to Watch.