

## **Administrator's Update for 2/16/11**

### **Outreach for Input**

**By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator**

A large part of what we do as Charlotte County staff is to gather input. As we move into 2011 there are several opportunities for the community to be a part of the process in county government. Public input is being sought on topics such as the budget, community revitalization, and environmental planning.

Recently two workshops were held to gather citizen input on the budget process, one on Jan. 31 in the Murdock Administration Center and one at Tringali Recreation Center on Feb. 2. Attendees gained an understanding of the current budget through a presentation, and there were opportunities for the public to speak and offer comments to all in attendance. To further the citizen input on the county budget, an online survey is available on [www.CharlotteCountyFL.com](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com) until March 1.

To help create the master plan for the Medical District Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) in central Port Charlotte, a series of charrettes, or public meetings, is being held at the Cultural Center of Charlotte County on Aaron Street. The first charrette was held Feb. 3. The next meetings will be held from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Feb. 17, and March 24. The goal of the project is the development of the Citizen Master's Plan for the Medical District area. The charrettes provide a venue for the public to give input and help direct the county in reinvigorating and revitalizing this area. Maps of the Medical District and additional information can be found on [www.CharlotteCountyFL.com](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com). For further information regarding the workshops, contact Jim Fendrick at 941.764.4920.

Public comment is being collected on the use of more than two million dollars of HUD (U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development) funds earmarked for neighborhood stabilization. Based on HUD guidelines, the Medical District CRA is being targeted. The county is prepared to use the majority of funds for demolition of blighted structures, with remainder for purchase of foreclosed properties for rehab or new construction for rental properties for very low, low, or moderate income households. Citizens can submit comments until Feb. 20 via mail to Robert Hebert, Housing and Community Initiatives Manager, 410 Taylor St. Punta Gorda, FL, by phoning 941.505.4889 or by e-mail to [Robert.Herbert@CharlotteFL.com](mailto:Robert.Herbert@CharlotteFL.com). More information is available on [www.CharlotteCountyFL.com](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com).

Public input into the planning of an environmental park is invited at two Environmental Festivals to be held later this week. Funded by a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency, the land bordered by Crawford and Rickardway Avenues and Lantern Light and Corfell Streets in mid-port Charlotte will become an environmental park and all ideas for the planning of the park are welcomed. The first festival will be held Friday Feb. 18 from noon to 2 p.m. near the entrance to Murdock Circle Apartments, and the second will be held Saturday Feb. 19 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the corner of Crawford Ave. and Lantern Light Street.

### **Renewable energy news**

Charlotte County Government and the Charlotte County Green Building Program from our building and growth management department became partners with FARE (Florida

Alliance for Renewable Energy) for the upcoming 2011 Florida Renewable Energy Tour. The tour will be visiting ten cities across Florida. Individual tour stops will feature site visits to renewable energy and energy efficiency installations during the day, with a town hall-style event at night including discussion from local and state legislators on pending renewable energy legislation and initiatives. Expected attendees of the 2011 Renewable Energy Tour are small and midsize businesses in Florida, renewable energy advocates, city and municipal employees, city and local sustainable and green commissions, regional planning councils, utility employees, and local officials including city and county commissions, various elected officials, and State Senators and Representatives.

### **Greater-capacity bus**

The sixth hybrid Dial-a-Ride bus is going through the final preparations before being deployed for passenger service. This bus differs from the other hybrids because it is capable of transporting four wheelchair clients along with eighteen ambulatory riders. The other five hybrid buses are capable of holding one wheelchair and 20 ambulatory riders.

### **Baseball**

Back in December the Charlotte Stone Crabs wrapped up their season here at the Charlotte Sports Park, winning the Southern Division Championship of the Florida State League for the second year in a row. The Tampa Bay Rays are now back for spring training through the end of March. Practices open to the public started this week, as they gear up for their opening home game on Feb. 26.