

Administrator's Update for 2/23/11
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

The final grant application for HUD neighborhood stabilization funds is now available for viewing and the public comment period for citizen input on the use of the funds has been extended to Feb. 28. Based on HUD guidelines, the Medical District CRA is being targeted. Submit comments via mail to Robert Hebert, Housing and Community Initiatives Manager, 410 Taylor St. Punta Gorda, FL 33950, by phoning 941.505.4889 or by e-mail to Robert.Herbert@CharlotteFL.com. More information is available on www.CharlotteCountyFL.com.

Aqui Esta on schedule

The Aqui Esta road-widening project is on schedule and budget. Trench drains and driveway installations are complete, and sidewalk construction is complete on the north side from Bal Harbor Boulevard to Magdalena Drive. Street lighting has been installed on the south side of Aqui Esta. Roadway construction on Aqui Esta Drive at the intersection of US 41 continues.

JJIS training

Staff from our family services division recently attended Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) training with the Department of Juvenile Justice Data Integrity Officer for Circuit 20. Completion of training allows for staff assigned to youth services to have full access to the JJIS system to enter, track and release youth in the re-entry program. This access will also allow staff to better track recidivism on all youth programs. Last week two youths successfully completed the juvenile re-entry program.

Tree trimming

Staff in the community services department has trimmed back the tree line along 500 feet of border between the Carmalita Park horse arena and the Charlotte campus of Edison State College. The woods had grown through the fence over the years and were starting to create damage. By giving our part-time staff a few extra hours, the county saved \$2,000 net versus outsourcing the project. In addition, future maintenance will be easier to perform.

Florida Highwaymen

The Charlotte County Library System celebrated Black History Month by featuring a program on the "Florida Highwaymen." In the early 1950s through the 1980s a group of twenty-six African-American artists known as the "Florida Highwaymen" used vivid and bright colors to display the beautiful untouched Florida landscape in paintings. Al Black, a legendary member of the group, discussed his personal experience as a highwayman as well as his special talent of capturing Florida on canvas at the Mid County Regional Library. This program was funded by the Florida Humanities Council and celebrates the rich contribution and strong tradition of Florida's visual arts.

Fire/EMS vehicles

Charlotte County Fire/EMS just received 2.5-ton military truck from the State Division of Forestry. This truck will be used by the department to fight brush fires in areas of Charlotte County that large fire apparatus cannot access. The unit will be built by the department's emergency vehicle maintenance division, saving thousands of dollars by using inmates from the Charlotte County jail's inmate work program. The brush fire unit will be the third one in the department's fleet of brush units to help combat wild land fires.

The first 4x4 fire engine was just purchased by Charlotte County Fire/EMS. This engine will be housed at Fire Station 9, located off State Road 31 in south Charlotte County. This unit will give the department full access to homes in the Cook Brown, Huffmaster and Williams Road areas. This is due to the area's dirt roads and water wash outs during rainy season which make it difficult to get regular fire apparatus down the roads. The engine will also have the capability to draft water from ponds and drainage areas to help extinguish fires in areas that have no fire hydrants.