

Administrator's Update for 5/25/11
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Our building and growth management department staff took zoning changes to the Enterprise Charlotte Airport Park (ECAP) zoning district to the Board of County Commissioners at last week's land use meeting. The change to the zoning district involved adopting a new use into the Industrial category, called Green Industry. The Board approved an ordinance adopting the ECAP zoning district revisions. Next steps include improving the landscaping requirements of the zoning district.

Big Surf

Earlier this month our Charlotte County community services department hosted the thirteenth annual "Big Surf" fishing tournament at Englewood beach. The event was free for children 3 to 12 years of age. The 63 participants in this year's tournament were accompanied by parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters. At check-in, each child was given a rod, reel and tackle box furnished by Fish Florida. At the end of the tournament the participants were treated to a cook out followed by the awarding of trophies for the biggest, smallest, most caught and most unusual.

LIHEAP funds

Our family services division has completed the allocation of the 2010-2011 Low Income Home Energy Program (LIHEAP) funds prior to the deadline of May 31, 2011. The division will release the 2011-2012 LIHEAP funds on May 25, 2011. LIHEAP is a federally-funded Block Grant provided through the Florida Department of Community Affairs. The one time per year home energy assistance grant is provided to eligible households for the purpose of heating or cooling their homes, and is paid directly to the consumer's energy vendor. The program may assist with emergency energy assistance under certain situations.

Bridges and roadways

Public work's bridge maintenance crews have completed inspection of 94 of the County's 127 bridges. Of the 94 surveyed for maintenance needs, repairs and renovations have been completed on 74 of the bridges. Maintenance activities included sweeping, weed trimming, guardrail repairs or replacement, brush trimming and minor concrete repairs. Future bridge maintenance activities will include pressuring washing and re-painting as deemed necessary.

Our public works department has indicated that the permits have been received and the design work is complete for the Bermont Road mill and resurface project. This project will mill and resurface the roadway and add four-foot paved shoulders to each side of the road. In addition, the box culvert at Small Creek will be replaced and twelve other culverts or box culverts will be extended to accommodate the extra shoulder width. Work will also be completed to alleviate a drainage issue approximately one mile west of Bronco Road. The construction portion of the contract will require Board approval before construction can begin.

Reaching out

Our Charlotte Harbor Visitor and Convention Bureau staff recently participated in the Spring Travel Expo at The Villages, a community located about two and a half hours north of Charlotte County. Preliminary estimates indicate that approximately 3,000 residents attended this consumer show in search of Florida vacation ideas and information. Research conducted by show organizers revealed that the majority of this affluent market takes at least two in-state vacations annually, prefers to travel mid-week, and is interested in visiting natural attractions and beaches. Charlotte County had a strong presence with representatives from area accommodations staffing three booths at the expo. These industry partners focused on showcasing our unique attractions and highlighting vacation packages and discounted lodging rates for Villages residents. In addition, more than 1,100 of our 2011 Visitor's Guides were distributed while staff fielded a variety of detailed questions about Charlotte County.