

Administrator's Update for 7/27/11

By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Assistant county administrator Kelly Shoemaker and Charlotte County program liaison Jason Stoltzfus traveled to Washington, D.C. last week to participate in the Gulf Coast Sustainable Economies Roundtable at the White House. Jason was formally recognized as a "Champion of Change" for his work with recovery from Hurricane Charley and for boosting the area's economic development by bringing green-economy projects to the community.

The White House Champions of Change initiative profiles Americans from all walks of life who are helping the country rise to the challenges of the 21st century. For more on the Champions of Change initiative, visit www.whitehouse.gov/champions.

Jason Stoltzfus was also one of three speakers at the Gulf Coast Sustainable Economies Roundtable session, where he presented an overview of Charlotte County and discussed recovery efforts related to Hurricane Charley and economic issues. The captive audience included representative from eight federal agencies, including the US Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, and Transportation. This speaking opportunity was a rare chance to present our Charlotte County community to federal and local leaders.

Mosquitos

Florida's coastal communities are teeming with mosquitos and Charlotte County is no exception. Early seasonal rains have produced a bumper crop of the salt marsh mosquitos, more than we have seen in quite some time. This aggressive insect has a range of 20-plus miles and leaves bigger welts than freshwater mosquitos. Our pest management division is conducting an all-out assault on mosquitos by maximizing the number of nightly fogging missions and aerial spraying operations to reduce the adult mosquito population. In addition, they are trying to limit future hatches with a daytime intensive larviciding operation, aimed at breeding sites.

Volunteer firefighters

Pending approval from the Board of County Commissioners, the Charlotte County Fire/EMS department will be establishing a volunteer firefighting program for state-certified firefighter EMTs & paramedics. Any state-certified person can pick up a volunteer application at Fire/EMS headquarters located at the Public Safety Building, 26571 Airport Road Punta Gorda FL or they may contact Chief Dennis R. DiDio at 833-5601 for more information.

Developing business programs

An economic development office staff member attended the Suncoast Technical Forum's (STF) recent meeting. The group is working toward engaging the educational system at the technical school and collegiate levels in business program development to tailor educational programs to

existing business needs. They are also working to expand the network and market reach for the technology companies in Charlotte County through membership in the STF.

Public works

Approximately 3.4 miles of stormwater ditches have been cleared in south Charlotte County near C.R. 74 and the Town Estates subdivision. The work will be moving into Charlotte Harbor to clear the main drainage ditch at Kings Highway near Harbor View Road.

Demolition of the Alligator Creek Bridge on Burnt Store Road is complete and construction of the new bridge continues. Phase one of the Burnt Store Road widening will extend the existing four-lane road section of North Jones Loop Road to U.S. 41 and install additional turn lanes at the US 41 intersection. Burnt Store Road will be widened to four-lanes between US 41 and Notre Dame Boulevard.

Gymnastics championships return

Our Charlotte County tourism office has announced that the Amateur Athletic Union Gymnastics Fall State Championships will return to the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center, Dec. 10 and 11, 2011. Five hundred to 700 female athletes, between the ages of 4 and 18, are anticipated to compete during the two-day championships. Our tourism office assisted the host organization, Horizon Gymnastics and Dance Academy of Port Charlotte, with securing the facility and the event bidding process.

This annual event rotates locations and the Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center last hosted the event in Dec. 2008. Overall the event attracted approximately 600 female athletes to the area who brought with them about 1,800 family members, generating an estimated \$342,000 in direct expenditures. When Charlotte County residents bring state, regional and national sporting events, meetings and conferences home to Charlotte County, they are making a positive economic impact on the local economy through direct and indirect expenditures and introducing event delegates to a new vacation destination. Residents who want to bring their meeting or event home to Charlotte County can email Sean Doherty, Sales and Sports Marketing Manager at sean.doherty@charlottefl.com.