

Administrator's Update for 8/31/11  
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Last week the Board of County Commissioners worked on legislative priorities to be presented to the Charlotte County legislative delegation at the delegation's meeting on Sept. 8, from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Charlotte County Cultural Center on Aaron Street in Port Charlotte. The meeting is open to the public and will include a public hearing on local bills and other issues that members of the public may wish to address.

There are many government Information Technology (IT) groups in the Charlotte County area with very distinct areas of responsibility and expertise. Earlier this month seventeen IT directors and managers got together for a Charlotte regional government IT meeting. This involved all the constitentials for Charlotte County, as well as the school board, and court administration for both Charlotte County and the 20th Judicial Circuit. Although these agencies currently have ongoing working relationships in terms of infrastructure, hardware, services and knowledge sharing, this is the first time they gathered together at one table to discuss areas of mutual concern. The meeting focused on disaster preparedness and business continuity, and included discussions on ways to strengthen ties and seek further areas of collaboration.

The Charlotte County Economic Development Office (EDO), along with other area economic development offices and chambers of commerce, is endorsing the upcoming 17th Annual Southwest Florida Blue Chip Community Business Award Luncheon. The luncheon is sponsored by BB&T-Oswald Tripp and will be held Nov. 3, 2011 at the Harborside Event Center in Fort Myers. The EDO encourages nominations of local businesses that have overcome adversity to achieve success. To be eligible for nomination, the principal office of the business must be located in Charlotte, Collier or Lee County; the business must be in continuous operation under the same ownership for at least three years; and employs 5 to 400 people. Applications must be received by Sept. 12 and may be obtained from the Charlotte County EDO.

The Midway Boulevard widening project, phase one, is a sales tax project that was designed to widen Midway Boulevard to four lanes, from Elkcam Boulevard to Sharpe Street (approximately 600 feet east of the Harbor/Midway intersection). The project included sidewalks, new traffic signals at Harbor Boulevard, a raised median, protected turn lanes at selected locations, street lighting, and drainage improvements. Work on this project is now substantially complete, and Midway Boulevard is open to traffic utilizing all lanes. The contractor has finished excavating the stormwater retention ponds on Burkhart Drive.

Two garden beds have been completed for the Community Garden at South County Regional Park. The park's staff has been working with TEAM Punta Gorda to get the first Community Garden in Punta Gorda up and running. TEAM successfully applied for a grant from the Charlotte Community Foundation to help fund the construction of the garden. The grant monies will allow the garden to be completed, including construction of a handicap-accessible bed.

On Saturday, Aug. 20, Charlotte County community services department hosted a "Skate Bash" event at the JM Berlin/Rotary Skate Park. The Skate Bash was free to the community and attended by approximately 30 skaters. Hot Dogs were donated by Wal-Mart, an anonymous donor supplied drinks, and skate parks from as far as Tampa sent decals and shirts for the participants.

The summer reading program at the Charlotte County libraries served over 4,000 children. The theme for this summer was "One World, Many Stories" and offered a combination of fun programs, crafts and lots and lots of reading. All of the libraries had great attendance and many of the children visited multiple libraries.