

Weekly Update from Administration for 10/12/11
By Kelly Shoemaker, Assistant County Administrator

Earlier this month our community development department hosted the third annual Southwest Florida Green Futures Expo at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center. Over 40 exhibitors offered a wide variety of products, services and information pertaining to this year's theme "An Exploration in Green Living." Vendors offered various solar photovoltaic systems, energy efficient windows, massages and green health products and plants and trees for home gardens. Several tours were available including mangrove walks, a boat tour of Charlotte Harbor and a green home tour featuring some local green certified homes and buildings. Other activities and entertainment included "Cyclor," the Waste Management Robot and Rain Barrel painting. Attendance is estimated at approximately 1000 people and feedback from both the exhibitors and the guests was overwhelmingly positive. To make this event such a success, Charlotte County partnered with many surrounding jurisdictions including the City of Punta Gorda, the City of North Port and the City of Cape Coral. A full list of our partners and sponsors, plus information about our exhibitors can be found on line at www.CharlotteCountyFL.com/BCS.

The Southwest Florida Energy Options Conference was held on October 5 at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center. The approximately 100 attendees enjoyed a meet-and-greet breakfast, followed by a choice of panel discussions covering topics such as economic development, retro fitting, financing for business and green businesses, alternatives to PACE, wave technology, bio-mass, and bio fuel technologies. Panelists included area business organizations such as the Suncoast Technology Forum, FGCU, Small Business Development Center, SCORE and the Small Business Development Service, as well as area business professionals. At the luncheon, the Enterprise Charlotte Economic Council announced the start of its i2i (Innovation to Industry) contest. The contest will encourage and support the nation's entrepreneurial innovators with the intent of helping them turn their concepts into a viable business located in Charlotte County. For more information visit www.i2iFL.com.

October is Community Design month and our comprehensive planning staff is performing educational workshops throughout the schools of Charlotte County. During the workshops, students are introduced to planning, from its history to the future of smart growth, and how it pertains to Port Charlotte. With the use of Legos and aerial maps, student groups build houses, parks, hospitals and more. Through these workshops, staff gets to share what we do with the new generation and see what is important to them, and what they would focus on in their neighborhoods. The workshops are ongoing throughout the month of October.

Our natural resources staff recently conducted a prescribed burn of approximately 20 acres in Amberjack Environmental Park. The burn was conducted primarily for scrub habitat restoration and fuel reduction, which helps maintain healthy habitat and will benefit scrub-jays, gopher tortoises and other wildlife, as well as reduce the risk of wildfire. This burn will satisfy requirements for the Florida Communities Trust (FCT) grant for the property.

This month marked the start of the Giant Community Garage Sales at Tringali Recreation Center in Englewood. The garage sales are free to the public and approximately 185 people attended our first sale of the season. The Giant Community Garage Sale is held on the first and third Sunday of each month continuing through April.

The Charlotte County Emergency Management Division hosted an ICS (Incident Command System) 300 training course at the Public Safety Complex. More than 30 individuals from six counties were present in this integral class that is part of the foundation of NIMS (National Incident Management System). A nationwide effort has been underway for more than 10 years, to have a common system and terminology that allows responders, planners and emergency managers to work seamlessly when disaster strikes.

Charlotte County Fire/EMS will be hosting open houses at Fire Headquarters and several fire stations during Fire Prevention week. Please come and meet your local Fire/EMS personnel. There will be station tours, apparatus displays, and demonstrations at the following locations, all held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.: Oct. 13 at Fire/EMS Headquarters, 26571 Airport Road, Punta Gorda; Oct. 17 at Fire/EMS Station 1, 3631 Tamiami Trail, Port Charlotte and also Fire/EMS Station 7, 27437 Mooney Ave, Punta Gorda; Oct. 19 at Fire/EMS Station 4, 13600 Marathon Blvd, Gulf Cove and also Fire/EMS Station 12, 2001 Luther Road, Deep Creek. For more information, please call Charlotte County Fire/EMS Headquarters at 941.833.5600.