

Weekly Update from Administration for 11/16/11
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Our Charlotte County facilities construction and maintenance department recently secured \$91,552 in rebate reservations through FPL's solar rebate program. Nearly \$1 million in rebate funds were released when the rebate program opened at 8:30 a.m. on Oct. 27. Within five minutes, the funds for solar photovoltaic projects were completely reserved. The rebates make it financially feasible for Charlotte County to move forward with several solar projects. These include two photovoltaic systems; 32 kilowatts at the Charlotte Sports Park and 10 kilowatts at fire station 12. Solar hot water heating systems will also be installed at fire stations number 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 and 12. In addition to these projects, an 11.5 kilowatt photovoltaic solar array is being incorporated into the construction of the new human services building on Loveland Boulevard. The estimated annual electricity savings that will result from these projects is \$17,000.

Business leaders from Brazil

The Charlotte County economic development office, the City of Punta Gorda, the Charlotte County Airport Authority, as well as several county business leaders greeted about 30 business men and women from Brazil earlier this month who arrived for an inbound Trade Mission. The group was welcomed at the Punta Gorda Airport by the community at the Trudeau Warbird's hanger. The group was very interested in our business community, educational system, how business-friendly our government is toward new business, and Charlotte County's quality of life. In addition to meeting Charlotte County's business leaders, the group toured the area, stopping several places including Edison State College, Fishermen's Village, Muscle Car City, the Charlotte County Sports Park, Englewood beach, and the Punta Gorda Speedway. The Charlotte County economic development office is interested in establishing a partnership within Brazil that will help develop our entrepreneur and innovation initiatives.

USSSA tournaments coming

The United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) has agreed to hold at least two of their upcoming baseball tournaments in Charlotte County. These tournaments, which are both projected to attract between 35 and 40 teams, will take place at the Charlotte Sports Park, North Charlotte Regional Park, and Harold Avenue Park. Age groups for this tournament range from under 13 to under 16 and teams are expected to hail from all over the gulf coast—from Tampa to Naples and beyond. The first tournament will take place Nov. 18 through 20, and the second event will occur Dec. 9 through 11. Our county tourism staff partnered with Charlotte County community services staff to secure the event.

Lunch and Learn for entrepreneurs

Our economic development office is assisting our entrepreneur support organizations, which includes SBDC, SCORE, and SBD LLC, in organizing a lunch and learn session for entrepreneurs. The lunch and learn will be held Friday, Nov. 18 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Charlotte County Technical Center Auditorium, Building A, 18150 Murdock Circle in Port Charlotte. The speaker will be Michael A. Sisti, author of "The Failure Myth." The program is open to the public, and there is a \$10 fee to cover lunch. Local entrepreneurs will be recognized. Our local entrepreneur support organizations will be conducting other events throughout this week, including presentations to high school students and the Edison State College Business Club. Register for the lunch and learn by end-of-day Nov. 16 by calling the Charlotte County economic development office at 941-627-3023 or by emailing FloridaEDO@charlottefl.com.

Real estate services moved

Our real estate services division recently moved to the Building Construction Services building at 18400 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte. The division is now in the same location as planning, permitting, and zoning, further enhancing our one-stop shop. Phone numbers and email addresses remain the same—real estate services can be contacted via email RES@charlottefl.com or by phone 941.764.5580.

Hydrologic restoration

Charlotte County community development planning staff is spearheading a regional committee effort to restore historic surface water flow-ways from the Cecil Webb Wildlife Preserve, east of I-75 to the Yucca Pens Preserve on the west side of U.S. 41 south of Zemel Road. The Regional committee includes SFWMD, SWFWMD, EPA, ACOE, FDOT, DEP, and Lee County. Restoring these historic surface water flows will restore the native plant and animal communities on the preserve and freshwater flows to Charlotte Harbor needed to maintain important fish and shellfish habitat and nurseries.