

Administrator's Update for 1/25/12
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Last week our information technology (IT) division met with the IT staff of other government agencies in the Charlotte County area at the Charlotte Harbor Event Center. This is the second time the Charlotte County Government Regional IT group has met to discuss areas of mutual interest and concern, share information about projects and look for opportunities for collaboration. This month the group invited a Microsoft representative to discuss various Microsoft product lines, their plans for these products and how they might affect the agencies' technology plans. In addition to our Charlotte County IT division, the group contains members of the Charlotte County Clerk's Office, Tax Collector, Property Appraiser, Sheriff's Office, School Board, City of Punta Gorda, Supervisor of Elections, as well as members of the 20th circuit court, public defender, and State Attorney's office. The group has agreed to meet regularly and is excited about the potential of this group to work together, establish lines of communications and share resources.

Zemel Road Landfill

The Zemel Road Landfill Gas to Energy project was one of five Projects of the Year chosen by the by the EPA's Landfill Methane Outreach Program. The gas to energy system takes methane gas from the decaying refuse at the landfill and uses it to fuel generators which provide electricity for approximately 4,000 homes.

Earlier this month the Commissioners unanimously approved the land lease at the Zemel Road landfill to SYNAGRO to build a regional bio-solid composting facility. This facility will receive bio solids and compost the material into a commercial product. This is expected to generate approximately \$350,000 in savings and revenue annually.

Pest fly-in

Our Pest Management Division recently participated in a Florida Mosquito Control Association "Fly-In" held in Ft. Myers and sponsored by Lee County. Our pilot and pest management staff demonstrated our Adulticide Spraying process. An analytical study is being conducted to determine the effectiveness of our spray field settings.

Regional economic development

In early January our Economic Development Office gave a presentation to the general membership of the Gulf Coast Venture Forum (GCVF) to discuss the economic development strategy of Charlotte County and regional partnership with our neighbors to the north: Sarasota and Manatee counties. Other participating panelists were Mr. Mark Huey, President and CEO of the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota and Ms. Sharon Hillstrom, Director of the Manatee Economic Development Council. During the panel discussion, the presenters discussed the positive attributes that attract businesses from early stage to more mature to the Gulf Coast region: weather, water, educational facilities, arts and culture as well as a lack of state income taxes. The Gulf Coast Venture Forum promotes the success of southwest Florida's new and emerging businesses by bringing together the best entrepreneurs, early stage venture capital firms and Angel Investors.

Kids Get-A-Plan

Our Charlotte County emergency management division was asked to once again visit Sallie Jones elementary school in Punta Gorda to present the Kids Get-A-Plan Program to the second grade classes. The 50-minute program presents the Florida Division of Emergency Management website that gives student activities and provides lifesaving information beneficial to families in emergencies like tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and wildfires. Other schools will be scheduled in January for this presentation that is now in its second year. It was very well received by teachers and students alike and is a fun way to learn lifesaving information.

Senior resource center

Our senior services division case management supervisor participated in the Senior Resources Center steering committee meeting at the Cultural Center of Charlotte County. This meeting was spearheaded by the Senior Leadership Council under the direction of the United Way of Charlotte County. Space at the Cultural Center is being made available to allow non-profit and government organizations a senior resource center on-site to provide face to face assistance to elders.