

Administrator's Update for 5/9/12
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Our Charlotte County Economic Development Office was recently host to the first of several planning workshops in which the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council is gathering information and input from the community to help in the preparation of the five-year regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). About 25 people attended this interactive workshop and discussed projects vital to the local community and the region, including an incubator, Murdock Village entertainment district and business technology park, and improved intra-state transportation connections. Input received at these workshops will be vital for future economic development at the regional and state level. Workshops will also be held in Glades, Lee, Sarasota, Hendry and Collier Counties, as well as at the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Results of all workshops will be discussed at the regional meeting scheduled for May 19 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council office in Fort Myers. For more information or to register please visit www.swfrpc.org.

Transit service

Charlotte County Transit has added another bus wrap to our bus fleet. The wraps cover the busses with large graphics intended to advertise or educate the public. Transit currently has nine wraps and fifteen signs which total \$2,850 in monthly advertising revenue.

In response to a customer's suggestion, for clients calling in reservations Dial-a-Ride has added a "leave a message" line to its call down automated tree. Customers may now leave a message for a call back during peak call volume time to minimize wait time for an operator.

Earth day

As a part of Earth Day celebrations, the Myakka Elementary School Environmental Club toured the Zemel Road Landfill facility. The students learned how their garbage gets from the curb to the Landfill and what happens to it from there; from separating metals, tires and construction debris, to burying common household garbage. Other important components such as proper disposal of hazardous waste and the importance and benefits of recycling were also discussed. The students also observed the methane gas-to-energy project and had the opportunity to see the actual process by touring the many gas wells and seeing how the gas feeds into the cleaning equipment, which then sends it to power the engines that create the electricity.

Keep Charlotte Beautiful participated in the Vineland Elementary School Earth Day event at the end of April, which allowed students and teachers to learn about various environmental activities available in Charlotte County. Information about the Keep Charlotte Beautiful programs and solid waste divisions such as the Landfill, recycling and, the gas-to-energy project was distributed.

Busy parks

The Charlotte Sports Park hosted the second annual Girls on the Run 5K on the last Saturday in April. The Girls on the Run organization is a non-profit prevention program for girls in third through eighth grade, with the mission to "educate and prepare girls for a lifetime of self-respect and healthy living." This huge event had 472 participants this year.

The Charlotte Stone Crabs regular season is in full swing and the team held a six-game home stand at the Charlotte Sports Park at the end of April. Total attendance for the six games was almost eleven thousand people.

Our Harold Avenue Recreation Center recently reports usage numbers for May 1, 2011 through April 30, 2012. These statistics include a total of 1,537 registrants for programs and 17,036 spectator visits. Harold Avenue Recreation Center is just one of several community services department facilities and their programs include adult and youth tennis, gymnastics, tae kwon do, dog obedience, and many others.

Overall, our parks facilities show a great amount of usage in the recent months. From October 2011 to present, our parks facilities had 513,344 participants in all the programs. This just represents seven months of use. Our county has many facilities and programs available. Visit the community services department at www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov to explore the offerings.