

## **Administrator's Update for 1/9/2009**

### **By Roger Baltz**

During the current times of economic slow down, our County is continuing to move forward with many important capital projects related to Public Works, Utilities, and Facilities. A summary listing of several of these projects and their status is now available on our County web site. You can find this information at [www.charlottecountyfl.com](http://www.charlottecountyfl.com) under Administration. Click on the "CIP report" heading.

The Stone Crabs minor league baseball team now has an official home at the Charlotte Sports Park, as business offices for the team management were completed this past week. The team will play their very first game on April 9, 7:00 p.m. against the Fort Myers Miracle.

Our County encourages green construction concepts in support of environmental stewardship. Part of the County's green program involves certifying buildings that follow these concepts. This past week County staff members worked with the Health Department to review their new facility on Loveland Blvd for compliance. This analysis will provide the data required to gain a Green Building Certification through the Florida Green Building Coalition.

County staff is also in the process of gathering information regarding green initiatives that we have adopted for our own organization. We have taken steps to create efficiencies and reduce waste through various activities such as insuring recycling and installation of energy efficient products.

Charlotte County residents were very generous to families in need over the holidays. Contributions to our food pantry enabled our Human Services Department to provide holiday supplies to 60 low-income families. Donations are still needed, so please continue to drop off your non-perishable items in our food collection boxes located at various County facilities.

Our Senior Services division also received 185 gifts through the NBC2-Perkins Restaurant Giving Tree Program. These gifts were delivered to Charlotte County seniors who receive in-home and grant funded services.

Charlotte County Utilities Heartship program accepts donations from CCU customers to help others pay their utility bills. In December we had an unprecedented \$1,800 donated which provided one-time assistance to low-income families in crisis. If you are a CCU customer you may contribute to the Heartship program throughout the year by adding an extra dollar or two to your check each time you pay your bill.

Our Utilities Department recently announced the availability of its Toilet Rebate Program to residential customers and more than 200 rebate application requests were received in the first week. Residential customers who receive their monthly water bill from CCU are eligible to replace up to two high-flow toilets (3.5 gallons per flush or higher) with new, low-flow models (1.6 gallons per flush or less) and to receive a rebate of up to \$85 per toilet. Rebates of up to \$100 per toilet are also available for commercial customers. For more information on the program you may call 888.843.9832.

The County Visitor's Bureau staff met with Ripken Baseball management (Dec. 18) to discuss how the tourism industry and community can work with and support Tampa Bay Rays Spring Training and the Charlotte Stone Crabs baseball team. Strategies which evolved from the meeting include hotel packages, partnering with the Florida International Air Show, and encouraging area businesses to distribute collateral.

Charlotte County Extension Services Florida Yards & Neighborhoods program specialist held three public workshops in 2008; two were held at the Environmental Campus on Harbor View

Road in June and December and another was held at the Tringali Community Center, Englewood in August. A total of 67 residents participated in these workshops, increasing their knowledge of the County's fertilizer ordinance, proper irrigation practices, landscaping and turf management. Residents also learned how to determine fertilizer needs, how to select and purchase a fertilizers and correct fertilizer application methods. Extension plans for 2009 include soliciting homeowner and civic associations and specific interest groups offering them presentations at their locations, Extension will continue to hold regional workshops through out the year.

Our Solid Waste Management Division anticipated that the switch to automated and once-a-week sanitation collection services would generate numerous calls from our 72,000 residential dwelling units. To help with the transition and answer questions that residents may have regarding their sanitation services the Division created a Hot Line phone number of 941.883.3533. Since its inception the Hot Line has received 13,000 calls. In the month of December over 640 calls were received on the Hot Line. The Hot Line service will continue for a few more months, this will allow seasonal residents to seek out answers.