

Administrator's Update for 2/20/2009

By Roger Baltz

Our Charlotte County 2008 Annual Report has been completed and is available online at CharlotteCountyFL.com. The report provides an overview of our accomplishments and other information on operations from this past year. Also available at our website's *Publications* section is the latest issue of *Charlotte Shines*, which provides an update on our capital improvement projects.

The Charlotte Sports Park officially reopens next week and our Fire/EMS and Emergency Management staff has prepared appropriate plans to safeguard visitors. The plans include responding to major incidents and the development of a medical safety team. The team members will assist with medical emergencies during major league baseball games.

A series of radio spots will be running in the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater areas promoting Charlotte County in conjunction with the onset of the Tampa Bay Rays Spring Training games. The objective is to encourage overnight stays and generate room nights and visits to area businesses.

I participated in a tour of our County jail facility this past week. I also attended briefings with our local legislative delegation.

Our Human Services Department hosted a two day training seminar on Healthy IDEAS (Identifying Depression, Empowering Activities for Seniors). This depression program for older adults and family caregivers provides case managers with assessment tools for prescreening depression in senior adults and provides resources for successful intervention and solutions.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection has approved the composting operations and design improvements to the Site Processing Facility at the Zemel Road Landfill, located in south Punta Gorda. By completing the design work in-house, utilizing the staff from Environmental Services and Charlotte Utilities, approximately \$20,000 in engineering costs were saved.

Our Public Works Department has moved forward with a Notice to Proceed to begin construction for the AQUI Road Widening Project. The first construction progress Meeting was held on Tuesday February 3, 2009, and an update was presented to the Punta Gorda City Council on Wednesday February 4, 2009.

Since the implementation of the new lot mowing code enforcement process in January, 52 properties have been abated by the County and charged for the service. The majority of these are abandoned properties. This new enforcement process has significantly improved the County's response time to such code violations and, as a result, has reduced expenditures.

At this past month's Water Authority Board meeting it was also announced that the Authority will host a Regional Water Conservation Policy Summit on April 3, 2009. Each County Commission has been asked to send Commissioner delegates to discuss and formulate regional policy initiatives on water conservation that will ensure the long term sustainability of the region's water resources.

The Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources administrative building at the Charlotte Sports Park has been renamed Rowley-Zuraw Hall in honor of two local sports fans. Rex Rowley and George Zuraw are long-time Englewood residents who have been involved in various community and high school sports activities and have been important supporters of major league baseball in Charlotte County.

Environmental and Extension Services, Mosquito Control Division, gave a presentation to the County Commissioners regarding the outfitting of a helicopter owned by Mosquito Control (acquired through military surplus) to perform aerial adulticide applications for the control of adult, biting mosquitoes. Currently, the County contracts this service to a private company. The outfitting of the helicopter with a spray system and other associated electronic and safety equipment will cost approximately \$71,000. By performing this operation in-house, after the initial capital expense, a cost savings of approximately \$128,000 could be realized in the first year of operation. Subsequent years' savings could amount to approximately \$200,000 annually. The level of service is not anticipated to decrease from that currently being provided.