

## **Administrator's Update for 2/27/2009**

### **By Roger Baltz**

Our County Commissioners held a joint meeting with the Airport Authority this past week. The Commissioners and Authority members discussed the economic development potential at the airport and shared information that is intended to facilitate cooperation and work together more efficiently.

On Feb. 20 our Commissioners held a strategic planning and goal setting session. We have continued to identify specific goals, and areas of focus which will be important in the coming months as we proceed with a performance based budgeting process.

The Charlotte Sports Park has been featured on the Association of Builders and Contractor's Florida Gulf Coast website. The article details the construction project that included many "green" efforts. Recycled materials removed during the renovations included 1,189 tons of rebar, 110,000 pieces of masonry, 67 miles of wire, and 4.8 million lbs of concrete.

Our Fire/EMS Department has received a \$37,000 Grant from the Florida Department of Health Services. This Grant is to be used for new and enhanced services, equipment, and training.

The Coral Creek Bridge project in west County began in Sept. 2008. Over the past few months the work has concentrated on relocating utilities and driving pilings which will support the bridge decking. This week the contractor made the first of many concrete pours for this project. The new bridge should be open to traffic in about 16 months.

Our Growth Management Department recently released new demographic and socio-economic projections. The update of the Comprehensive Plan (*Smart Charlotte 2050*) required a set of population, housing, and employment projections that could forecast future demand for such public services as water and sewer, schools, roads, and other facilities to the year 2050. Population is projected by age group and gender, allowing our planners to develop policies for schools, hospitals, and other age-specific facilities with a better understanding of how our future population will be distributed. Employment projections include job growth in industrial, commercial, and service sectors.

Our Utilities staff met with FPL representatives to discuss FPL's Energy Efficiency and Facility Improvement Program. FPL has worked with municipalities, school boards and government agencies throughout the state to successfully develop energy conservation measures and is now reaching out to water/wastewater utilities for cost reductions through energy savings. This program will fit in well with our continued efforts to lower expenses and follow green initiatives.

The first meeting of the Green Building Stakeholders group was held to discuss the implementation of a Green Building Ordinance and its impact on County operations. The key outcome was learning how much we, as a County, are already doing in the

effort to become more “green” and how to take advantage of additional opportunities. Part of the review process will be benchmarking with surrounding communities and tapping into regional efforts.

Pamela Baker, Grants Management Analyst, in the Human Services Department was invited to speak in Tallahassee before the Senate Committee on Children, Families and Elder Affairs. Ms. Baker was asked to speak about our Criminal Justice Diversion Planning process. Future funding may be available to us for an implementation grant for Charlotte County.

Our 2009 Charlotte County Visitor’s Guide is now available through the County tourism office. The comprehensive award-winning guide helps the County communicate to prospective visitors all that there is to see, do, and where to stay in Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands. Guides will be distributed through local chambers, attractions, accommodations, Official Florida Welcome Centers, and as a calling card at numerous tourism trade events.

Charlotte County is participating in a print, web, and e-mail international marketing program with Visit Florida, the state's marketing organization, which includes promoting the destination in five international travel guides, the state’s international web site, and three international e-magazines, all translated into French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, and Queen’s English. This is a cost effective way for Charlotte County to market the area as a vacation destination to the 4 million international visitors who come to Florida annually.