

Administrator's Update for 6/12/09

By Roger Baltz

Volunteers are very important to our County and our community. Charlotte County has relied on volunteers who have assisted us in a variety of programs and activities. Before Hurricane Charley, we had an active group of over 1,200 volunteers who worked in our libraries, in sports activities, and in environmental programs. Now, more than ever, volunteers are an important part of County operations. To make it easier for our citizens to volunteer, we are now posting volunteer opportunities on our website at CharlotteCountyFL.com. The Volunteer Program can be accessed by clicking on the Volunteer link.

Charlotte County Fire/EMS received a grant from State Homeland Security for the next two years in the amount of \$52,473.00. These funds will enable the Department to maintain all of the specialized equipment utilized by our Special Operations Unit. The grant funds will also provide additional education for members of the Department's Hazardous Materials Team and enable them to access the training needed to maintain their certifications.

Our Mosquito Control section has been busy spraying for mosquitoes throughout the County. Over 30 ground and 4 aerial spray missions have taken place in the last 2 weeks in response to breeding associated with recent rains.

Our Utilities Department has moved forward with a program of lining wastewater collection pipelines to prevent inflow and infiltration. In comparing a four-month period of the year that typically receives a monthly rainfall of 4+ inches, from 2003 to 2009, we have effectively reduced influent to our East Port Water Reclamation Facility by approximately 785,000 GPD or 13% during rain events. This equates to about \$985 per day of savings in reduced treatment costs and helps defer the need for an expansion of the plant facilities.

Pedestrian push buttons located at traffic-signalized intersections on the State Highway System are being upgraded to comply with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). The new buttons, which activate the pedestrian phase of the traffic signal, are much larger and user-friendly. The materials were supplied by the Florida Department of Transportation and County staff will be installing all of the new ADA pushbuttons throughout the signalized network.

Sidewalk construction has begun along U.S. 41 in certain areas of the County. This work is a project that has been in the planning stages for several years. Originally envisioned by Florida Department of Transportation as wide meandering sidewalks from the Gilchrist Bridge to Murdock Circle, the construction was divided into several smaller projects and has changed over the years. While funded mainly by FDOT, the Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has also been a contributor. The CRA requested sidewalk changes in their district that borders U.S. 41 from Gilchrist Bridge to Gardner Street. When completed, the sidewalk system will allow for safe

pedestrian travel all along U.S. 41 and will greatly add to the visual attractiveness of the area.

Work on the exterior walls and windows of the Murdock administrative building will begin this week. This construction, paid for through a partial grant from FEMA, will allow us to reinforce the windows and prepare for future storms. While the windows held up very well during Hurricane Charley, we did have areas of water intrusion. By reinforcing the windows now, we lower our risk and protect the contents of the building from possible future damages.

We have received unofficial notification from the Insurance Services Office that the County has managed to maintain its Class Five rating in the National Flood Insurance Program. If formally confirmed this means that our citizens will continue to receive the 25% discount to their flood insurance premiums.

Charlotte County Health Department and Emergency Management have joined together to develop a pandemic flu component that is incorporated into the Charlotte County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. This component, called an Annex to the CEMP, defines how Charlotte County will prepare for, respond to, and recover from a pandemic occurrence.