

**Administrator's Update for 8/14/09**  
**By Roger Baltz**

This past week our Assistant County Administrators Kelly Shoemaker and Ray Sandrock and myself met with management staff from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFMD). We have scheduled these meetings on a re-occurring basis over the past several months to review projects, follow up on issues, and maintain strong communications. Our County often times must obtain regulatory permits from SWFMD for our capital projects. The meetings have been productive.

Our Punta Gorda library is undergoing renovations. It is anticipated that the library will be closed until mid September. The improvements will increase our capacity and enhance our ability to provide services. The project budget is just over \$87,000.

Our Fire / EMS Training Division trained approximately 12 individuals from Little Gasparilla Island Fire Rescue in CPR and the use of automatic external defibrillator. This training will assist local personnel on the Island when responding to cardiac emergencies before County Fire/EMS personnel arrive from the mainland. This training has been an on-going effort between the Island and Fire/EMS to improve response times.

Utilities is moving forward with the purchase of four (4) 25 cubic yard dump body trailers, to be used in conjunction with two (2) truck tractors and one (1) 6,000 gallon tanker, in order to haul and dispose of sludge in an environmentally-friendly, efficient and effective manner for the county. The vehicles will be used to transport dewatered sludge to the landfill daily, while 2 of the trailers are kept positioned in a loading position, so as be ready for hauling and disposal of sludge at all times, on a rotational basis. The landfill then uses the sludge in a compost mix and prepares it for ground cover at the landfill, saving our County hundreds of thousands of dollars in expenses.

The new County discount prescription drug card program is under way. The program, managed by Coast2Coast, provides drug discounts to County residents at over 59,000 pharmacies nationwide. There is no charge for the program and the card can be used regardless of income or existing health coverage. Discounts are also available for pet prescriptions, when they are filled at a participating pharmacy.

Public Works staff has overseen completion of the Cheshire Waterway drainage control structure project on time and under budget. The roadway is now open and the work will reduce flooding and improve drainage within the neighborhood.

Our Mosquito Control Division recently completed an analysis of costs incurred by using the County's helicopter for night time aerial spraying operations, in lieu

of a fixed wing aircraft. So far this mosquito season, Mosquito Control has flown seven missions utilizing the helicopter and has realized a cost savings of \$43,479. Mosquito Control also has been able to reduce pesticide costs by using an alternative product recently approved by the State. The amount saved in pesticides so far this summer has been \$11,450.

Our County Commissioners have approved moving forward to apply for a Clean Renewable Energy Bonds (CREBs). The funds are to be used to finance the County's voluntary Solar Rooftop Program, which will allow interested homeowners and small businesses to participate in a distributed power generation program. Utilizing the latest solar system equipment available, solar energy will be harnessed on site at local homes and businesses, to respond to the electrical demand

Our Emergency Management Office, in conjunction with the National Weather Service, recently held a Skywarn Class. Skywarn is a program that trains volunteers to recognize certain weather patterns and encourages the spotter to report them to their local weather offices. Initially planned as a one time class, the overwhelming response has necessitated more training classes being added. Over 65 volunteer spotters are trained in each session.

Our Emergency Management operations has also received a second grant in the amount of \$45,000 through the Department of Homeland Security – State Homeland Security Grant Program. This will allow the Emergency Management Division to conduct local planning, training and exercises such as Delivery of Incident Command Training Courses and Exercise Programs with local agencies. This grant is 100% funded and required no local match by County.

July saw an increase in single family permitting with 27 building permits issued compared with 25 issued in June. Additionally, seven single family permits were taken out of the permit Extension Program, with the projects finally being completed in preparation for a certificate of occupancy.

Our 211 Call Center has been notified that it has successfully completed the Consultation Assessment phase of the national Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) accreditation process. The next and final phase requires an on-site review of 211's operations and verification of its adherence to AIRS Standards and Accreditation criteria. We expect this to take place sometime in the fall.

Human Services and or Fire/EMS staff participated in the "Back to School" extravaganza held at the Cultural Center. This event assists children and families with school supplies and provides information on services that are available in the community.