

Administrator's Update for 7/18/12
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

For the fourteenth consecutive month, Charlotte County Tourist Development Tax collections (commonly referred as bed tax) have increased over the same period last year. For the month of May, bed tax collections were up 12.2 percent over 2011. Year-to-date, collections are up 13 percent. When visitors stay overnight in accommodations such as hotels, resorts, condominiums, or RV parks for 6 months or less, they are charged 5 percent Tourist Development Tax (TDT) on top of the 7 percent sales tax. Sixty percent of the TDT is allocated to fund the operations of Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau and promote Charlotte County as a vacation, meetings and sporting destination. A portion of the TDT funds operations at Stump Pass Beach State Park and beach renourishment with the remaining 40 percent funding the bond for renovations at Charlotte Sports Park.

Coastal Living

Englewood is featured in the July issue of Coastal Living magazine as the publication's coastal dream town in a six-page article about visiting and living in the area. Several Englewood, Cape Haze and Placida businesses that met with the article's author during her March 2012 visit are mentioned in the article. The visit was coordinated by the Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau. The publication has a circulation of 650,000 and the article has an advertising value of more than \$116,000. The Bureau anticipates additional articles will be generated as a direct result of the author's visit.

Digital extinguisher training

Charlotte County Fire/EMS department has a new BullEx digital training system for fire extinguisher training. The old, non-environmentally friendly way to teach people how to safely use fire extinguishers was to mix gas, and diesel fuel, then discharge a real ABC extinguisher into the open, leaving the powder to free fall all around the grounds and equipment. This new BullEx training system is completely non-toxic, safe and can be used completely indoors. The unit is driven by computers, and can be used with laser or water-based extinguisher simulators. The Charlotte County Fire/EMS safety committee teamed up with the risk management division and \$10K of grant monies were obtained to purchase this great training asset. We are hoping to have it out in the public venue for teaching fire extinguisher use and safety by mid-August.

Fly a kite

Recently our Charlotte County community services hosted "Lets Go Fly a Kite" at Englewood beach. The event was designed for kids and their families to come out to a morning at the beach to make, decorate and then fly their kite. Twenty five children plus parents, guardians and grandparents helped in the construction and decoration of the kites. Sun Birds Hobbies was present to demonstrate the art of kite flying and to show off some of their beautiful kites. Later the kids were treated to a hot dog lunch sponsored by the Englewood Winn Dixie.

Turtles

Charlotte County community services staff have marked locations via GPS and collected data of approximately 480 marine turtle nests to date, but have over 600 marine turtle nests for the entire county. This is a surprising number for this early in the season. Staff has identified a Kemps Ridley marine turtle nest—truly rare to see on our beaches—along with a few green marine turtles as well. We typically have Loggerhead marine turtles nesting on our Charlotte County beaches.