

Administrator's Update for 10/10/12

By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Two roadway widening projects recently moved forward. The Board of County Commissioners (BCC) approved the 10-foot sidewalk design for the east side of CR 771 (Gasparilla Road) for the widening project. The standard lighting design was also approved. Staff had garnered considerable public input through meetings and an online survey to help choose the designs. Construction is anticipated to begin in late 2013. For the Midway Boulevard widening project (phase two) in the Parkside area, the BCC directed staff to purchase the eastern section of the First Presbyterian Church property for the final stormwater retention system needed for the project. Construction for this project is also anticipated to begin in late 2013.

MSBU/TU ordinances under review

In an effort to standardize and update the county ordinances governing municipal service benefit units (MSBU) and municipal service taxing units (MSTU), the Charlotte County public works department is reviewing each of the corresponding county ordinances. In the review, aspects such as the purpose, territory, and membership sections are being considered. The review committee will examine the ordinances of 44 streets, drainage and lighting districts; 3 stormwater utility units, 3 municipal service districts; 4 sewer and water districts; and 21 waterway districts for consistency of language. Any amendments will be reviewed by the County Attorney's Office and then be scheduled for a public hearing before going to the Board of County Commissioners for consideration.

Emergency messages

The Charlotte County Emergency Management Office has been authorized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to compose and issue emergency messages to the residents and visitors of Charlotte County. The Emergency Management Office will be able to provide warnings and instructions in the event of a hazardous, natural or technological incident. Warnings and instructions may be sent through IPAWS (Integrated Public Alert and Warning System) that will reach the public via television, radio, internet, and cell phone. The IPAWS is not a subscription service and residents do not have to sign up to receive the warnings and instructions. Emergency Management staff had to complete training provided by FEMA to satisfy the application requirements. The office is authorized to issue warnings and instructions through two systems, the Emergency Management Network (EMNET), maintained by the Florida Division of Emergency Management, and Web EOC, the critical incident management software used in the Emergency Operations Center.

Pirate invasion

At the end of September our Charlotte County community services department co-sponsored the Englewood Pirate Invasion with Walk the Plank Productions. The first time event raised funds for Englewood Helping Hands. Over 1,500 people attended the event held at Englewood Beach and Chadwick Park that included a movie night for families, pirate-themed vendors, a ship-to-shore battle re-enactment, live music and entertainment. Over \$500 was raised for Englewood Helping Hands, a non-profit serving Englewood and Cape Haze residents in need of assistance with food, clothing, and other basic needs.

Blogging about Charlotte County

Staff from the Charlotte Harbor Visitor and Convention Bureau educated about 40 travel bloggers and journalists during a reception last month. Nine other Florida destinations and partners participated in the event coordinated by VISIT FLORIDA. Staff introduced Charlotte Harbor and the Gulf Islands to the participants, many of whom were not aware of the area's offerings, and provided them with story ideas to share with their readers. Opportunities like this boost editorial content on our destination, which continues to be an effective and cost-efficient way to reach potential visitors.