

Administrator's Update for 11/21/12

By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Charlotte County Utilities (CCU) has been treating and disposing of grease trap wastes from local restaurants since 2001. There is a negative environmental impact associated with the continued land application of brown grease, and significant costs to food service establishments and wastewater treatment plants in dealing with this troublesome waste. Recent technologies have emerged making it now possible to separate the contents of brown grease and recycle it for environmentally-beneficial purposes. Charlotte County began looking for a partner for the recycling of these discarded wastes.

Through the procurement process, Affordable Bio Feedstock, Inc. (ABF) was selected to be our partner and the county entered into a negotiated agreement in Jan. 2012. ABF is at the leading edge of innovation for the environmentally responsible recycling of grease trap waste. Through a process termed "thermal depolymerization" the contents of brown grease are separated, producing a variety of products which can be used as biodiesel feedstock, organic compost or as a soil enhancer.

The ABF thermal depolymerization plant is located at our East Port Water Reclamation facility on Loveland Boulevard and is capable of recycling more than 10 million gallons of brown grease, creating over 200,000 gallons of liquid feedstock and over 750 tons of viable organic compounds. Through a shared vision, AFB and CCU seek to improve bio feedstock availability and affordability through the responsible recycling of waste oils and greases.

Kiwanis Park

Charlotte County community services staff recently spoke to the Kiwanis Club members regarding progress on improvements at Kiwanis Park. Kiwanis Park was donated to Charlotte County by the Kiwanis Club, who had originally received it from the General Development Corporation thirty-one years ago in 1981. Then Kiwanis President Richard Lannigan received the state's Outstanding President's Award for the project which included local groups such as the Kiwanis Club, the Key Club of Port Charlotte High School, 4-H, Junior Leadership, and others. Recent improvements to the 32-acre park have replaced aging boardwalks and an aging bridge, cleared underbrush, and added an ADA-compliant concrete trail. Additional improvements will implement recommendations from the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design" (CPTED) strategies. The Kiwanis Club intends to begin programs at the park that include community and neighborhood activities. To volunteer and be a part of the exciting rebirth of this park, contact the community services department at 941.625.7529.

Temporary library open

The Englewood Library expansion project is progressing and the temporary library location opened last week. Limited materials and computer access is now available at the temporary location in the Tringali Community Center meeting room during normal library hours. For the expansion, the roofing is now 90 percent complete. The additional walls in the expansion have been constructed and the electrical services and plumbing installed. Glass installation is approximately 75 percent complete. Demolition to the existing building entrance has occurred and new screen wall footers have been dug and formed. Anticipated completion is April 2013.

Veteran events

Charlotte County veteran services, in conjunction with the Charlotte County Veterans Council, the Charlotte County Homeless Coalition and various veteran organizations of Charlotte County held the Eighth Annual Homeless Veterans "Stand Down" at the Family Services Center on Saturday, Nov. 3. Thirty-five homeless veterans attended. Volunteers and staff distributed meals, clothes, bicycles, toiletry and other essential personal items to the veterans. Assistance with veteran claims and enrollment into the VA Health Care system was also provided to eligible veterans.

The Charlotte County Veterans Council, one of the non-profit agencies that use transit assets for veterans, recently transported 17 blinded veterans to the Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) meeting in Ft. Myers. BVA is an organization of blinded veterans helping blinded veterans. Through their service programs, regional groups, resources and advocacy, BVA hopes to make life better for blinded veterans and to provide individual encouragement and support.

Land management software event

Our Charlotte County information technology department and community development department jointly hosted the South East Regional Fall Update event for the Accela Land Management Software. The event, presented by Accela, was held at the Charlotte County Event and Conference Center and was attended by over 50 government employees from as far away as Kentucky. Presentations were given surrounding the new and enhanced features of the software. Charlotte County currently uses Accela software to handle all land use applications, building permits, and code enforcement and contractor licenses along with utility regulatory permits.