

Administrator's Update for 2/27/13
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

We were recently notified by the National Hurricane Conference that Charlotte County has won the prestigious Special Achievement in Hurricane Public Awareness Award for the "Know Your Zone" collar program. The award will be presented at the National Hurricane Conference in New Orleans in late March. This is the second major award garnered by this unique program of reflective vinyl collars in four colors that identify a neighborhood's vulnerability to storm surge. Over the past two years, county staff and more than 300 community volunteers installed 9,400 of the reflective vinyl collars on stop signs and street signs across Charlotte County's unincorporated areas. Charlotte County is the only jurisdiction in the nation to have such an expansive program that covers neighborhoods with a total of more than 140,000 residents. The "Know Your Zone" life-saving idea program, paid for with grant funding and installed by volunteers, is now under consideration by several coastal communities in hurricane-prone states. To look up your evacuation zone, visit our website CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click Know Your Zone in the popular links.

Spring training is here!

Tampa Bay Rays players and staff have reported for spring training at the Charlotte Sports Park and spring training games began last weekend. Earlier this month, the baseball team held its annual Fan Fest event at Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg. Our Charlotte Harbor Visitor and Convention Bureau staff attended to share information on what there is to do in our area, the team's spring training grounds. About 500 visitor guides were handed out during the day-long event as many fans were planning day and overnight trips to Charlotte County for spring training.

Transit improvements

A Medicaid representative visited the transit division to train staff on how to use the Florida Medicaid website, which can be used to make sure Medicaid clients are eligible for Medicaid medical transportation. The website is more reliable and efficient than the past verification method of calling a 1-800 phone number. By using the Florida Medicaid website, transit can now confirm that a client is either eligible or not for transportation services.

Transit's new extended bus parking lot is now being utilized. Transit vans have been moved out of the past location at the sheriff's parking area and are parked in closer proximity to the Transit facility. The new bus parking area holds all 35 vehicles.

Pay for parking online

Beach and boat ramp parking in Charlotte County can now be paid by cell phone. Charlotte County's partner vendor, Park Now, allows smartphone users the ability to download an Apple or Android app and have the convenience of paying by cell phone. Patrons can also call a toll free number and enter their parking space information to pay

for parking, extend parking, or to end parking. To register for the service, visit www.ParkNow.us.

Garden expansion

The success of the community gardens around the county has been tremendous. Staff from the human services department recently met with Team Port Charlotte to discuss preliminary plans for expanding the Community Garden at the Family Services Center on Gibraltar Drive. The expansion plans call for the addition of six new beds as well as a tool shed for gardening equipment. Staff will be working with our facilities department for site plans approvals and with Team Port Charlotte for installation of the expansion, which is planned for this summer.