

Administrator's Update for 1/22/14
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Congratulations to Ty Harris on his new position as the director of our community development department. Mr. Harris has already been serving the area public as a Charlotte County assistant county attorney for the past year. His background includes more than ten years of community development experience as well as 16 years of legal experience in law firms and as a partner.

The current director of community development, Dan Quick, will be moving to public works at the end of this month when Alan Holbach retires. Mr. Holbach began his employment as the maintenance and operations manager and has progressed to public works director over his 15 years of service to the county. Mr. Quick has been with the county since 1999, serving as stormwater project manager and then six years as the county engineer until taking on the position of community development director in 2011.

Early next month Fire Chief Dennis DiDio is retiring, too. Chief DiDio has been with Charlotte County for 27 years and was promoted to director and fire chief of public safety department in 2000, which is the longest standing tenure of any previous fire chief in the history of Charlotte County Fire/EMS.

Please join me in congratulating the new directors and extending best wishes to our retiring directors. Their leadership and dedication to their colleagues and the citizens of Charlotte County are greatly appreciated.

U.S. 41 Microtunnel & Weir project

The Fordham and Niagara master stormwater model is one of several county-wide drainage basin models produced and managed under the direction of the Charlotte County Stormwater Utility. Major waterways include the Elkcam-Yale, Fordham and Niagara waterways, which cross under U.S. 41 and carry surface water runoff flows to the Peace River and Charlotte Harbor.

During the 1950s and 60s, General Development Corp. installed stormwater infrastructure in Port Charlotte and North Port. While the drainage system was sufficient at the time of construction, development in the area has expanded over the years increasing the amount of stormwater runoff and overburdened the aging, substandard system. The water control structures, or weirs, have also reached their life expectancy. Improvements are needed to increase the drainage capacity to allow sufficient stormwater runoff to flow towards Charlotte Harbor. The only way to increase flow capacity under U.S. 41 is to increase the size of the pipes under the road—they are the last restrictive crossings within several area waterways.

The "U.S. 41 Microtunnel and Weir" project is designed to increase stormwater flow under US 41 at the Fordham, Elkcam and Pompano Waterways. Drainage work is currently underway at the northbound and southbound U.S. 41 access roads within the Pompano Waterway system. The contractor will be using a state-of-the-art microtunnel boring machine that was designed and assembled specifically for this project.

Microtunneling is a trenchless technology used to construct pipelines by consecutively pushing pipes and the microtunnel boring machine through the ground using a jacking system for thrust. Excavated soil is removed using a slurry that counterbalances groundwater and earth pressures. This method has a key advantage: microtunneling under U.S. 41 prevents roadway closures on U.S. 41.

However, to facilitate the project the locations of the access roads right at the Pompano Waterway are currently closed and will be opened to traffic as soon as work progresses to a point where motorists can safely utilize the road by the waterway. County staff members are working diligently with the contractor to reduce the amount of time the access roads at the waterway are closed, currently projected will re-open

in May 2014. All businesses are open along the access road; signage is posted to help motorists navigate the area.

Why is this happening now? To conduct work, the waterways must be blocked to allow the area to be dewatered. This is best done outside of the rainy season so the water flow in the canals can be managed with pumps. Once the rainy season begins, dewatering a canal with pumps becomes very difficult. In addition, construction was originally scheduled to begin the end of November. It was decided to wait until after the December holidays so that obstruction of the access road at the Pompano waterway would not hinder businesses during the holidays.

The status of this and other engineering projects is available online at www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov—lick Project Status Updates in the Popular Links list on the left. If you have any questions regarding this project please contact the Project Manager, Jeff Keyser, at 941.575.3632 or via email at Jeff.Keyser@charlottefl.com.