

Administrator's Update for 1/29/14

By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Last week we celebrated the completion of the last segment of the Cape Haze Pioneer Trail in Placida. The program acknowledged fifteen years of work spearheaded by Ann Mercer to convert the former Charlotte Harbor and Northern Railroad easement into a trail through the use of federal transportation enhancement program funds. The eight and one-half mile multipurpose trail allows users to travel from its trailhead near the corner of County Road 776 and Gasparilla Road down to Placida. There are two additional trailheads along the way and a final trailhead with restrooms is planned for the end of the trail.

Interim Chief

As I mentioned last week, in early February Charlotte County Fire Chief Dennis DiDio is retiring after 27 years of service. I am pleased to announce that Deputy Chief Marianne Taylor will serve as interim Fire Chief until the position is filled. Thank you both for your service and dedication to Charlotte County.

CCU preventive maintenance

As part of an ongoing preventive maintenance (PM) program for our water and wastewater facilities, Charlotte County Utilities (CCU) staff has been implementing numerous upgrades to improve performance and increase the efficiency of our wastewater collection, treatment and processing equipment. For example, our technicians have now replaced old parts with new electric control panels and pumps at two master lift stations, located in Greater Port Charlotte. This work effort saves thousands of dollars in costly repairs, as well as avoiding emergency breakdowns later.

Another example of our successful PM program is the improvements made to the master control cabinet and belt press at a wastewater facility. Staff undertook a multi-prong effort to eliminate trip hazards, improve ergonomics and allow for easier staff access to the equipment and improve work efficiencies, saving \$45,000 from outside contractor costs. Staff has also successfully extended the serviceable life of treatment components at one of our wastewater facilities far beyond that of the original equipment by allowing less wear and tear and providing a more efficient head works unit. By simply reinforcing mounting hardware on various drives and motors, applying corrosion-resistant coatings and lubricants to various components and adding tensioners to prevent wearing of chains and sprockets, the lifespan of the plant's head works are prolonged at a nominal cost.

CCU to host FDEP training

CCU's water treatment facility in Burnt Store was recently selected by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) as the host training facility for 20 new inspectors hired by the regulatory agency. The inspectors received training and education on the proper operation and maintenance of a plant. A question-and-answer period during the training followed with many questions for our staff as well as many positive comments on how impressed they were with our facility. This event provided an opportunity for FDEP staff to accomplish their educational goals and helped us to perpetuate a good rapport with state regulators.

Paving will begin

The 2014 Charlotte County paving program project provides for the resurfacing of roads in greater Port Charlotte and in the road and bridge districts. The contract was awarded at the Board of County Commissioners regular meeting on Jan. 14 and work is scheduled to commence the week of Feb. 8, 2014. Paving program maps showing the areas to be paved in 2014 are available online at www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov — click Project Status Updates in the Popular Links on the left.