

Administrator's Update for 4/9/14
Help us with the parks and recreation master plan
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Next week the Charlotte County community services department will be holding three public meetings to gather information for the park needs assessment phase of the "Countywide Parks and Recreation Master Plan." This is a great opportunity for citizens to guide the county in the future development of parks and recreation facilities over the next 30 years. Those who wish to participate at the meetings will break into smaller focus groups to provide input regarding park facilities, recreation programming, and levels of service.

The three meetings are scheduled as follows: 6 p.m. April 14 at the South County Regional Recreation Center, 670 Cooper Street in Punta Gorda; 1 p.m. April 14 at the Mid-County Regional Library, 2050 Forrest Nelson Boulevard, Port Charlotte; and 6 p.m. April 15 at the Tringali Recreation Center, 3460 North Access Road Englewood.

Super Boat Races

The first Charlotte Harbor Super Boat Grand Prix will be held this coming weekend with festivities starting on Friday in a parade through downtown Punta Gorda. The event will culminate in the races on Sunday, April 13. This is a big event for our community will bring many visitors and tourists to the Englewood Beach area. Traffic in the Manasota Key area will most likely be heavier than normal, but there will not be any road or bridge closures. We will be complying with U.S. Coast Guard requirements regarding marine traffic as follows: on Saturday April 12 and Sunday 13, the Tom Adams Bridge will be raised for boats to pass on demand as usual except for the times of 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. when the bridge will be raised every 30 minutes if needed. To help plan your weekend, there are maps of the parade route and of the remote parking areas at the event's website www.chsbgp.com.

Microtunneling update

Part of the U.S. 41 Microtunnels/Weirs project at the Fordham, Elkcam, and Pompano Waterways, involves using special equipment to tunnel under U.S. 41. This is the first microtunnel project in Charlotte County history. On Friday, March 28, the special tunneling machine came out the other side on target under U.S. 41 at the Pompano Waterway. The contractor has now completed the placement of 60-inch reinforced concrete pipe (RCP) under the southbound access road at the Pompano Waterway and is constructing the new weir on the northbound side. All businesses are open along the access road and signage is posted to help motorists navigate the area.

Equipment is being mobilized to the Elkcam Waterway to begin the preparation procedures for the second boring pit. Ultimately this project includes the replacement of existing culverts and stand-alone weirs, and a new weir across the Pompano Waterway north of the U.S. 41 northbound access road. The project also includes many details such as sidewalks, major drainage improvements, Charlotte County Utility (CCU) relocations and improvements, street lighting, site dewatering, flow diversion, excavation and fill, grading, sodding, and maintenance of traffic.

Government Academy

We just wrapped up the 2014 Charlotte County Government Academy last week. The 26 participants visited four county locations: the commission chambers, the public safety building, the beautiful Port Charlotte Beach recreation center, and the East Port environmental campus. Staff presented information about the many county programs and services of the departments under the Board of County Commissioners. This free program is held annually in the first quarter of the year.