

Administrator's Update for 6/25/14

By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Last month the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) approved a referendum that will be on the November 4 ballot. The referendum will ask voters to vote for or against extending the existing one percent local option sales tax. The monies will be used to fund critical projects in Charlotte County.

The one percent local option sales tax has been in effect since 1994, through three voter-approved extensions in 1998, 2002, and 2008. Over the years it has produced a total of approximately \$346 million in revenue to fund 51 projects in the County and 24 projects in the City of Punta Gorda. These projects include libraries, parks, roads and sidewalks, fire stations and many other essentials for a high quality of life.

A host of information is available on the county website: lists and maps of projects funded in the past by previous local option sales tax, maps and information on the proposed projects should the extension pass, and more. Visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click "1% Local Option Sales Tax" in the Hot Topics list on the left.

Work set to start on Gasparilla Road

The County Road 771/Gasparilla Road widening project will widen Gasparilla Road to a four-lane divided roadway with sidewalks and bicycle facilities, from State Road 776 to the vicinity of Rotonda Boulevard East. A preconstruction meeting was held June 4, 2014 and the Notice to Proceed was established for July 7, 2014. Work will begin on the south side of the project, near Rotonda Boulevard East, where the roadway will be widened to four lanes up to the bridge at the Butterford Waterway. The bridge work is anticipated to begin in mid-December 2014.

Summer Meals for Children

Charlotte County's 2-1-1 call center is assisting in providing information on the federally-funded Summer BreakSpot Program. Sponsored through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, this program furnishes free, healthy breakfasts and lunches to all kids and teens 18 and younger at various designated sites throughout Charlotte County during the summer. For more information on this program and to find the site locations nearest you, call 2-1-1 or visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click the BreakSpot banner.

Sculpture

The Peace River Botanical and Sculpture Gardens in Punta Gorda, scheduled to open in September 2016, welcomed Turkish artist Kemal Tufan earlier this month as he installed his sculpture titled "Keel." The Charlotte Harbor Visitor and Convention Bureau worked with the gardens to invite local media to meet the artist and view the installation. The 23-piece sculpture is estimated to weigh between 20 and 30 tons with the largest piece weighing 5,800 pounds. When open, the Peace River Botanical and Sculpture Gardens will attract local, regional, national and international visitors.