

Administrator's Update for 7/16/14

By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Last month staff members from Keep Charlotte Beautiful and the Charlotte County solid waste division gave a presentation at the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center (CHEC) summer camp in Englewood. Campers learned about the services Charlotte County solid waste division provides and the many programs of Keep Charlotte Beautiful.

Keep Charlotte Beautiful also presented CHEC with a "Little Free Library" to use at the center. This is the second location for Keep Charlotte Beautiful's "Little Free Library" program, part of the LittleFreeLibrary.org initiative to promote literacy and the reuse of books. The program promotes the idea to take a book, share a book and give a book. To further foster their mission, Keep Charlotte Beautiful volunteers built the library out of reusable materials and filled it with donated used books. The first Little Free Library is located at the Charlotte County East Port Environmental Campus at 25550 Harbor View Road, Port Charlotte.

Winchester Boulevard update

The Winchester Boulevard South Extension project includes the construction of a new four-lane connector from Placida Road to the Charlotte/Sarasota County line, with a direct connection to I-75 via River Road within Sarasota County. Within this project, the new box culvert in the Oyster Creek crossing is under construction. The contractor has completed the floor and walls and will be pouring the roof within the next week. Fruitland Avenue and the intersection of the Avenue of the Americas and Winchester Boulevard are closed and will reopen on or about Aug. 18, 2014, before the start the new school year. These closures serve to facilitate utility and drainage system installation, roadway construction, and to allow the contractor to complete the construction of the new roadway in the intersection without placing the motoring public in danger.

Library numbers

Charlotte County libraries are busy this summer—in June, 45,314 people visited a library in Charlotte County and checked out 69,030 items. At least 2,763 children came to a library and enjoyed one of our summer programs in June. It is wonderful to realize that at least that many children are reading or thinking about reading this summer. The summer reading programs for adults, teen and youth continue until Aug. 1.

The libraries are not just about books. Charlotte County libraries have over 7,000 DVDs available for lending out. Titles ranges from old movie classics to seasonal TV shows. The best number at the libraries is the cost to borrow a DVD: zero. Borrowing DVDs is free.

Florida SEE

The Florida Society of Ethical Ecotourism (Florida SEE) held its 14th annual membership meeting at the end of June at the Four Points by Sheraton in Punta Gorda. This was the first time Florida SEE met in Charlotte County and the Charlotte Harbor Visitor and Convention Bureau was a sponsor of the two-day event. As the professional authority for the ecotourism industry in Florida, the organization administers a state certification and recognition program that promotes sustainable tourism and assists ecotour providers to become environmentally sustainable, economically viable and socially and culturally responsible. The meeting included keynote presentations, panel discussion, kayaking activities, a wading trip with CHEC and a guided bicycle ride of downtown Punta Gorda. Attendees had a well-rounded experience of Charlotte County and the ecotourism opportunities we offer.