

Administrator's Update for 11/12/14

By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Permitting volumes continue to pick up and are expected to increase as winter residents arrive. In anticipation of this increase, the community development department has made some changes to their internal processes and online services to make permitting online much easier.

The department has increased staffing and visitors to the department will see a new customer service specialist on the front counter along with a new plans examiner dedicated to helping the customers. This has allowed us to change procedures internally to dedicate another plans examiner to work specifically on permits that need minimal review and decrease permitting times.

In addition, the new Deputy Building Official started last week. Ben Bailey comes to us from the City of Fort Myers where he was the Deputy Building Official and has experience as a contractor, plans examiner and code enforcement officer.

Changes were recently implemented to the online system to make it easier to schedule inspections. We are already seeing an increase in the number of inspections scheduled online and we hope to encourage more to do this.

The department's online services include inspection scheduling, fee payment and permit application for residential trade permits. Over 80 percent of permits that can be applied for online, are indeed applied for online. Department staff will work individually with any contractor who wants to know more about our online services—call 941.743.1201 or email bcs@charlottecountyfl.gov.

Flag from the Capitol

Congressman Tom Rooney and his local district office presented Charlotte County with an American flag that was flown over the United States Capitol. This Veterans Day it was flown over the Charlotte County Historic Courthouse in Punta Gorda as a special observance of Veteran's services and sacrifices. In cooperation with the Charlotte County Historical Society, the flag will be placed in a flag case and displayed for permanent viewing on the first floor of the courthouse.

Concession stands earn green designation

The new baseball and softball concession stands at Harold Avenue Park have been awarded the "Florida Green" designation by the Florida Green Building Coalition (FGBC). "Florida Green" indicates achievements in categories such as energy efficiency, water conservation, site preservation, materials, durability, and more. These new concession stands replaced two older buildings, originally constructed in the early 1980s, that needed extensive repairs after Hurricane Charley. The new buildings include restrooms and are fully accessible to meet ADA standards.

Youth Summit

Through the coordinated efforts of the family services division, the first Youth Summit was held at the Port Charlotte Beach Complex on Oct. 29. Over 100 teens attended from all area high schools. The participating youth discussed developmental assets, identified community problems and developed actionable plans to address them. The top two community problems identified by the youth were: improving safety and increasing recreational activities for youth. During the day, the teens took to social media to share their experiences at the Youth Summit. This resulted in a twitter

reach of 32,331 and exposure to 393,369 timelines. The Youth Summit was funded through a grant by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice.

Eagle back to health

Our natural resources division recently assisted with the release of a rehabilitated bald eagle at Charlotte Flatwoods Environmental Park. The eagle was found unresponsive on the trail. Rehab efforts for the adult female eagle were assisted by the Sierra Club and Peace River Wildlife Sanctuary. Charlotte Flatwoods Environmental Park is located at 15801 Tamiami Trail, Punta Gorda and offers 487 acres of preserve with a walking trail and birding opportunities.