

Administrator's Update for 4/22/15

By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

At the regular meeting last week, the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners approved a new impact fee schedule. The new impact fees are 40 percent of the recommended amounts based on studies that assessed the cost of each new structure being built in the County. The new fees will be in effect as of July 15, 2015 and will apply to permit applications made on or after that date. The impact fee schedule and more information is available online at www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov – click Impact Fees in the Hot Topics list on the left.

To lock in rates that are in effect now, staff has developed a pre-payment program for commercial structures. This program will be launched on Friday, April 24 and will only be available until close of business on July 14, 2015. For information about the impact fees or pre-payment program, please contact Shaun Cullinan, Planning and Zoning Official: 941.743.1922 or Shaun.Cullinan@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.

New Florida Building Codes

The 5th Edition (2014) of the Florida Codes has been adopted by the state of Florida and will become effective on June 30, 2015. Analyses of the changes with comparison tables are posted online at www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov – click Community Development in the Departments list on the left and then click “Notices & Updates” on the left. For more information about the new Florida Codes, please contact Ben Bailey, Interim Building Official: 941.743.1211 or BenBailey@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.

Associate Director - Legislation

Congratulations to Claire Jubb, business services manager of Charlotte County community development, for being appointed as the Associate Director - Legislation of the Florida Floodplain Managers Association (FFMA). The FFMA is an association of over 600 Florida professionals working in the many different aspects of floodplain management and flood insurance. Charlotte County has over 70 percent of all structures within a high risk flood zone and having the county represented at the state level will only improve the input Charlotte County has. For more information, contact Claire Jubb: 941.743.1241 or Claire.jubb@charlottecountyfl.gov.

Reaching out overseas

In order to boost its presence in overseas markets, the Charlotte Harbor Visitor and Convention Bureau (VCB) partnered with Brand USA to film five videos throughout Charlotte County earlier this month. The video hosts are native-language speakers in Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese and German and the videos showcase our ecotourism amenities, dining opportunities and attractions. Many international visitors tend to spend their holidays in Florida during the summer and fall. The videos are part of the Charlotte Harbor VCB's international marketing efforts which also includes hosting members of the international media, producing the annual visitor guide in German and distribute in Germany, and representation in Brazil.

How is all this funded? Charlotte County levies a 5 percent Tourist Development Tax (TDT, aka: bed tax) on accommodation stays 6 months or less. The first 3 percent is spent for tourism promotion and marketing support and the other 2 percent funds the debt for the bond for renovations at the Charlotte Sports Park. Our partner, Brand USA, was established by the Travel Promotion Act to spearhead the nation's first international marketing effort to promote the United States as a travel destination. No U.S. tax dollars are used to fund Brand USA. Operational dollars are calculated through matching one dollar of cash or in-kind contributions from industry and media partners to “unlock” one dollar from the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), which collects fees from international inbound travelers arriving from visa-waiver markets.