

Administrator's Update for 6/17/15
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

This past Monday morning the ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for Winchester Boulevard south, connecting Placida Road and S.R. 776 via a four-lane roadway. Winchester Boulevard is now completely four lanes from Placida Road north to River Road in Sarasota County. This project had a budget of \$17.4 million. Construction began in November 2013 and the project was completed six months ahead of schedule. At the ribbon-cutting event, the Winchester Boulevard Extension was dedicated to Mac V. Horton for his extensive services over the years to the Charlotte County community.

Illegal Dumping

The public works solid waste division, in partnership with the Charlotte County Sheriff's office, recently conducted two cleanups of several vagrant camp and illegal dumping sites in Charlotte County. Vagrant camps are not only unsightly because of the garbage they generate but also pose a potential health hazard due to the lack of sanitary services.

The first targeted area cleanup, conducted in January in the Northwestern side of Charlotte County, netted approximately three tons of garbage. Another cleanup conducted in May focused on the Bayshore Drive and overall mid-county areas and netted approximately 2.2 tons of garbage. The areas in question were reported by concerned property owners as well as identified by the county's illegal dumping code enforcement officer that routinely canvases the county.

Residents are encouraged to report illegal dumping activities to 1.866.Y.DUMP.CC (1.866.938.6722). If you observe someone dumping illegally, make a note of as many details as possible including the time, location, description of vehicles, license plate and what was dumped. Illegal dumping includes the yard debris that is dumped in the right of way or on private property without the consent of the owner. Additional sites have already been identified for cleanup and will be addressed as manpower and resources become available.

Guide to cycling

The Charlotte Harbor Visitor and Convention Bureau was recently awarded a VISIT FLORIDA Cultural, Heritage, Rural and Nature Marketing Grant in the amount of \$3,300. The matching grant will be used to develop and print a comprehensive guide to cycling in Charlotte County. The guide will promote Charlotte County trails, the free bicycle loaner program in Punta Gorda, maps of trails systems, and contacts for guided and scheduled bike rides.

Swim lesson scholarships

The community services department is partnering with the American Red Cross Centennial Campaign to be able to offer low-cost group swimming lessons to low income Charlotte County families. The qualification process is easy and applications are available on our County website: visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click the swim lesson scholarship banner or click Parks in the popular links. For more details please contact Marc Solomon, recreation program supervisor, at 941.627.1628 ext. 103.