

Administrator's Update for 10/14/15

Coastal Cleanup volunteers net tons of garbage

By Ray Sandrock, Charlotte County Administrator

Keep Charlotte Beautiful conducted the Charlotte County portion of the annual International Coastal Cleanup in September. The number of volunteers increased this year from 336 to 557 (a 60 percent increase) thanks to the recruitment of youth groups and extensive media coverage. Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center brought 154 volunteers to clean up coastal areas of Englewood. The volunteers removed more than three tons of trash from our waterways and shorelines.

Next up for Keep Charlotte Beautiful, which is supported in part by Charlotte County public works department's solid waste division, is the Charlotte Harbor Nature Festival scheduled for 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Nov. 21 at the Charlotte Sports Park. Please join us as we support the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (www.chnep.org) for this day of fun, family-friendly activities and environmental education about Southwest Florida.

Ballgame networking

Charlotte Harbor Visitor and Convention Bureau staff, in partnership with the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center, Fishermen's Village, Four Points by Sheraton Punta Gorda Harborside and Palm Island Resort, hosted 30 meeting and travel planners and journalists in a suite during the Tampa Bay Rays game against the Miami Marlins Sept. 29 at Tropicana Field. The function provided valuable networking opportunities to educate Tampa Bay area buyers and media about what Charlotte County has to offer in terms of meeting space, lodging, group tour opportunities and attractions. The use of the suite is part of Charlotte County's partnership with the Rays.

Web award

The visitor's bureau was recently recognized for its website, CharlotteHarborTravel.com, which was redesigned and launched in April 2015. The website earned the Silver W3 Award in the tourism category. The award was given by Simpleview, an industry leader of sales and marketing services for tourism organizations. The website contains content and photography produced by local writers and photographers and features a new, commission-free booking engine, making it easier for visitors to book their accommodations online. Members of Charlotte County's tourism industry can easily update their listings on the website and add photography and video.

Code compliance

Code Compliance Officer Andre Deschenes met with the New York section neighborhood watch group at South Port Square on Oct. 5. Deschenes reviewed ordinances, such as those addressing tall grass and trailer parking, and explained the code violation process from the time a complaint is filed to the final adjudication of a case.

If your club or organization would like to schedule a speaker for a meeting or event, Charlotte County provides free presentations on many county services and facilities. Presentations should be booked through the Charlotte County Public Information Office at 941-623-1092.

Water lettuce

A water lettuce outbreak on Lake Niagara in Port Charlotte was treated on Oct. 1 by aquatic weed control staff as part of their scheduled monitoring program. The initial application achieved a 90 percent to 95 percent kill rate of this invasive plant native to South America. As water lettuce normally requires a second follow-up treatment after the initial treatment is evaluated, the crew returned the last week to clear any remaining patches.

Get the app

If you have not downloaded the free Charlotte County app for your cell phone or tablet, I have an example of how it can work. On Sept. 30, a homeowner on Biscayne Drive in Northwest Port Charlotte submitted a report about a dangerous curve in his neighborhood where several vehicles had driven off the road. Staff from the public works department's signs and lights division inspected the road and concurred that signs would help prevent future incidents. We received a second submission from the homeowner with the following message: "Well done! Chevrons were put up less than a week after my request. Hope they slow down drivers."

To date, more than 800 users have downloaded the app and the county has received 292 service request and comments. To download the app, go to your device's app store and search for Charlotte County FL. Users also may submit requests on their computers by going to the county website, www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and clicking "Contact Us."

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