

Charlotte County administrator's update for 12/2/15

Charlotte County earns flood insurance discount

By Raymond Sandrock, Charlotte County administrator

Charlotte County received a Class 5 rating in the Community Ratings System, a voluntary program operated by the National Flood Insurance Program and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The rating earns flood insurance policy holders a 25 percent discount on their premiums for the next three years. Charlotte County has more than 27,000 active flood insurance policies and the discount saves our citizens approximately \$6.3 million per year.

The CRS requires participating communities to demonstrate a commitment to outreach and education, preservation, floodplain management and best practices that minimize the potential loss of life and property in a flood. Communities are required to re-certify their participation in the CRS every three years. Charlotte County is one of only 16 Class 5 communities in Florida. Only one community, the City of Ocala, has a higher rating.

The certification has been particularly challenging this cycle due to significant changes in the documentation required and the methodology for allocating credit to various activities. The Community Development Department coordinates the certification, which includes information and policies from nearly all county departments. Some of the programs that helped maintain our rating include the preservation and maintenance of land in areas of high flood risk; outreach and education to our citizens; a comprehensive drainage maintenance program; stronger building standards for structures in vulnerable areas and a comprehensive local mitigation strategy and flood warning program.

To learn more about flood insurance, preparedness, elevation levels and more, visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click Flood Information under Popular Links.

TV feature

Production crews from the popular British television show A Place in the Sun spent several days filming in Charlotte and Sarasota counties last week. The Charlotte Harbor Florida Film Office and Sarasota County Film and Entertainment Office assisted with the crew's itinerary and logistics. The lifestyle program about finding a perfect home in the United Kingdom and overseas airs on Channel 4, a British public-service TV station. This episode is scheduled to run in January 2016 and will be available to U.S. viewers on the Channel 4 website, www.channel4.com.

Exposure from such coverage, along with newspaper, magazine and website articles is a key driver of tourism, which spiked 19 percent in fiscal year 2014-15, including a 29.8 percent increase in September.

Santa's Sleigh

Charlotte County Transit Services launched its annual Santa's Sleigh Tuesday. Transit will provide free bus rides Mondays through Fridays through Dec. 20 to the Dollar Tree, Dollar General, Target or the Port Charlotte Town Center mall in exchange for a small gift to be shared with families living at the Charlotte County Homeless Coalition's homeless shelter. Please call 941.575.4000 to make a reservation 24 hours in advance of your ride.

Charlotte County Transit picks up riders at their homes and transports them to their desired location, whether it is for shopping, doctor's appointments, park visits or other reasons. For information about the county's transit program, go to www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click Public Transportation under Popular Links.

Also, look out for Santa driving a transit bus in Saturday's 37th annual Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce Christmas Parade.

Pancakes with Santa

Santa will be serving up pancakes at his annual Firehouse Pancake Breakfast twice this month. Join St. Nick and his helpers from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., Dec. 21 at Fire/EMS Station 12 at 2001 Luther Road in Deep Creek or Dec. 22 at Fire/EMS Station 4 at 13600 Marathon Road in Gulf Cove.

This popular event always fills up fast, so call in your reservation soon to 941.833.5600.

The Guide

A warm welcome to all our seasonal visitors. Whether you're a first-timer or a repeat visitor, Charlotte County offers a range of facilities, events and activities to keep you busy this season. To discover all that's in store for you, check out The Guide, Charlotte County Community Services' go-to source for getting the most out of your stay.

The Guide features information about parks, pools, libraries, boat ramps, historical programs and places and much more. Whether you're looking for a master gardening class, a guided nature tour, a pick-up pickleball game or a bike path, The Guide has it all.

Get a copy at county parks or libraries or view it online at www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov – click Parks under Popular Links.

Ray Sandrock is the Charlotte County administrator. Readers may reach him at raymond.sandrock@charlottecountyfl.gov.