

Charlotte County administrator's update for 12/16/15

Utilities Department earns prestigious award

By Ray Sandrock, Charlotte County administrator

The Charlotte County Utilities Department won the Florida Section American Water Works Association's prestigious Water Distribution System of the Year Award at the organization's fall conference in Orlando.

The award is given to a utility whose outstanding performance during the preceding year merits special recognition by the AWWA. Recipients must be an active member of AWWA, actively support the AWWA section, complete a comprehensive questionnaire and demonstrate high standards and integrity. Utilities competed against entrants that serve 46,000-69,999 customers. Entrants were judged on water quality, operations records, maintenance, professionalism, safety, emergency preparedness and cross-connection control.

Utilities Director Gary Hubbard and Utilities Superintendent Steve Kipfinger accepted the award at the conference and will present it to the Board of County Commissioners at an upcoming meeting.

Leadership program

Congratulations to Cari Branco and Natalie Hinger on being accepted into the 2016 Florida Government Finance Officers Association Leadership program, scheduled for April 4-8, 2016. Branco and Hinger were two of only 20 applicants in the state to be accepted in the program, which is designed to support and enhance the capabilities of Florida government finance officers.

"It's an elite program and an honor to have been accepted," said Budget Director Gordon Burger. "It's a huge opportunity for them."

Branco is the senior division manager for the Fiscal Services Department and Hinger is the department's financial manager.

Green award

Our county earned the highest possible score from the Florida Green Building Coalition for the new Harold Avenue Recreation Center concession stand. The coalition's 2015 Green Achievement Award recognizes construction projects that meet numerous strict criteria for energy efficiency, user safety and sustainability. For example, air quality is improved by the use of paint and adhesives with low levels of volatile organic compounds and/or formaldehyde. To

save energy, the building is equipped with light sensors that detect ambient sunshine and automatic dimming and turn-off switches.

The building was expressly designed and constructed to meet certification criteria, which will result in labor savings in managing and maintaining the building, enhanced performance, energy conservation and greater user comfort.

Skate park workshop

The Community Services Department will hold a public workshop to discuss the Capt. Don Cerbone Memorial Skate Park at 6 p.m. today at the Carmalita Park Football Meeting Room, 2605 Carmalita Street, east of Punta Gorda.

The skate park was developed by the not-for-profit organization Charlotte Skatepark Inc. Charlotte County entered into a lease agreement with Charlotte Skatepark in 1998. The county took over the park in 2001 and awarded a contract to Sanctuary Skatepark to run the facility. Sanctuary was later bought out by another company which chose not to return to the park following Hurricane Charley in 2004. No vendors responded to subsequent requests for proposals.

Charlotte County has since maintained the park, replacing ramp surfaces in 2007 and making additional repairs in 2011 and 2013. The workshop will focus on maintenance needs, improvements and park location in response to inquiries about its condition and future operations.

Sales tax projects

As we implement 1 percent local option sales tax projects, public input meetings will be a key part of the process.

A meeting to discuss the design of McGuire Park in the Parkside Community Redevelopment Area is scheduled for 4 p.m., Thursday at the Cultural Center of Charlotte County. A meeting about the South County Community Library is scheduled for 4 p.m., Jan. 14 at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center. I encourage all residents to take advantage of these opportunities to participate.

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