

Charlotte County update for 5/4/16

Public Works projects earn statewide awards

By Ray Sandrock, Charlotte County Administrator

Two Charlotte County staff earned statewide recognition from the Florida chapter of the American Public Works Association.

The U.S. 41 Microtunnel project, managed by Jeff Keyser, and the replacement of the DeSoto Canal Bridge, managed by Chuck Coons, won project of the year awards from the association.

The microtunnel work, which expanded stormwater flow beneath U.S. 41 to accommodate volume expected to be generated by the widening of Midway Boulevard, had previously received a Crown Communities Award from American City and County magazine. The project will now be entered in the APWA's national award contest.

The DeSoto Canal Bridge project replaced an aging bridge with a precast concrete span over the canal flowing beneath Harborview Road.

The awards were presented at the Florida Public Works Expo in Tampa and capped an impressive run of recognition for county staff in recent months. Individuals, divisions and departments have earned 18 awards in the past 15 months.

In addition to the Public Works awards, the National Purchasing Institute bestowed its 2015 Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award on our Purchasing Division led by Kim Corbett. Charlotte County is one of only 25 government agencies in Florida and one of only 47 counties in the United States to receive the award. The Purchasing Division has received the award 11 times.

Congratulations to all our award winners for their excellent work on behalf of our citizens.

Zika virus

Our Mosquito Control staff have been tracking reports about the Zika virus. As of April 27, a total of 427 travel-related Zika infections have been confirmed in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Florida leads the nation with 84 cases followed by New York (60), California (29) and Texas (30). None of the cases involved patients infected with the virus while they were in the continental U.S., Alaska or Hawaii, but U.S. territories (American Samoa, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands) have reported 596 cases of locally acquired infections.

Mosquito Control continues to monitor for the associated carrier mosquitos. Staff is coordinating with the Code Compliance Division to monitor potential mosquito breeding sites, such as areas containing junk, debris or high grass in violation of county codes. Mosquito Control Manager Scott Schermerhorn and Biological Specialist Beth Carey-Kovach have participated in five Zika or vector-related disease webinars organized by the American Mosquito Control Association, the National Environmental Health Association and the CDC. Carey-Kovach also attended a surveillance workshop organized by the Lee County Mosquito Control District and she and

Schermerhorn will attend a Zika response workshop hosted this week by Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Department of Health.

Our sentinel chicken flock is being raised and will be deployed in June, the traditional start of mosquito season in many areas. Outreach efforts to educate the public about potential breeding grounds recently included a mass mailing to all utilities customers to provide information about the Zika virus, as well as other mosquito-borne diseases, such as dengue fever and the West Nile virus.

For information about the Zika virus, visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click Zika Virus under Hot Topics.

Certification achievements

Community Services Resource Coordinator Mike Koenig and Senior Program Coordinator Lacey Solomon were designated by the National Parks and Recreation Association as Certified Parks and Recreation Professionals. They join four other community services staff to hold this prestigious certification.

“This is the gold standard certification in the field of parks and recreation. It illustrates a person’s commitment to the profession, as well as their knowledge and understanding of key parks and recreation concepts and principles,” said Community Services Director Tommy Scott.

Home care funding

Our Senior Services Division was notified we would receive approximately \$10,000 in additional state grant funds for the Home Care for the Elderly and Community Care for the Elderly Programs in the grant cycle ending June 30. These funds will provide home care services for the frail elderly in our community. The new grant cycle begins July 1.

Joint workshop

Commissioners, staff and I participated in the 13th annual joint workshop between the Punta Gorda City Council, Charlotte County School Board and Charlotte County Monday to discuss land use, school facility planning and concurrency. County staff presented an update on residential land use approvals to help guide the school district’s facilities planning. Commissioners and county staff learned about the district’s proposed school boundaries and construction projects, including the completion of Lemon Bay High School.

In a related issue, the county contractor widening Midway Boulevard is working closely with school district personnel on the next phase of the project, which will pass by Port Charlotte Middle School. Plans call for a new parent pick-up entrance to be constructed off Orlando Boulevard before classes resume this fall. For information about the Midway Boulevard project, visit MidwayUpdate.com.

Ray Sandrock is the Charlotte County administrator. Readers may reach him at Raymond.Sandrock@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.