

Charlotte County update for 6/1/16

Utilities earns Florida Excellence Award

By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

The Charlotte County Utilities Department earned the Florida Excellence Best Practices Award for its transformation initiative. The award recognized the department for its “implementation of a comprehensive strategic planning process that included integration of customer, workforce, information technology and capital improvement initiatives to support the organization’s mission with associated measures, targets and accountability systems.”

Florida Excellence recognizes public and private organizations that have successfully demonstrated best practices in one of three categories, customer, workforce and overall organizational excellence.

Utilities Department Director Gary Hubbard and consultants from KPMG, which conducted an operational audit of the department in 2014, presented an overview of the initiative to the conference in Orlando last month.

Snowbird Classic

The Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau received the Florida Sports Foundation Best Event of the Year – Small Market Award for the 2016 Snowbird Baseball Classic, held in February and March.

The foundation noted the event, which was created eight years ago by Steve Partington, generated approximately \$5 million in direct expenditures and \$10 million in economic impact. Players, coaches, families and fans booked 6,500 room nights across the region.

The bureau’s sports and marketing director Sean Doherty accepted the award at the foundation’s Sports Summit in Palm Coast on May 26.

O.C.E.A.N. award

Deedra Dowling, case manager supervisor for the Charlotte County Senior Services Division, was recognized by the Our Charlotte Elder Affairs Network (O.C.E.A.N) at its annual Sunflower Luncheon as its 2016 member of the year. This prestigious award honored Deedra’s 30 years of dedicated work to improve the lives of Charlotte County seniors.

Over her decades of service, Deedra has made an impact on the lives of hundreds of frail and disabled seniors and their families. Deedra embodies the true spirit of customer service and going above and beyond to meet the needs of her clientele.

In addition to her plaque, Deedra was given \$2,000 by O.C.E.A.N. She then donated the money to the home care program to shorten the waiting list for services.

Congratulations to Deedra on her exemplary service to Charlotte County residents.

Camp Skeeter

Mosquito & Aquatic Weed Control Division staff landed by helicopter at Peace River Elementary School as a kickoff to their annual "Camp Skeeter."

The Bell "Huey" helicopter, which is leased through the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office, is designated for larval control. Students were excited to see the helicopter land and each group ask questions and took a peek inside. Staff later returned to the school for classroom presentations on mosquito biology and to educate students about reducing larval habitats in their backyards and preventing bites during summer break.

Adams Bridge

The Tom Adams Bridge contractor has completed the foundation for the new tenderhouse and will now begin building the floors and walls. The drawbridge connecting the county's mainland to Manasota Key is being rehabilitated as well, which will continue to require intermittent lane closures in the coming year. The project is scheduled to be completed next summer.

To keep residents and visitors informed, we have created a website, www.tomadamsbridge.com. The site provides traffic advisories, project updates, answers to frequently asked questions, photos, videos and an email update registration form.

Geocaching

The Charlotte County Historical Center is adding some history to geocaching and questing this summer. History Quest will bring you out to local historic sites and reveal important clues to unlocking Charlotte County's past.

A kickoff meeting is scheduled for 3 p.m., Friday at 514 E. Grace Street, Punta Gorda. Staff will explain the details about the program, including what you'll need to start your adventure. Participation and admission is free for all ages.

For information, contact the Historical Center at 941-629-PAST (7278) or visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click the Playing tab for a link to the Charlotte County Historical Center. The website will be updated with a list of quests and geocaches.

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