

Charlotte County update for 6/29/16

Steady progress made on Midway widening

By Ray Sandrock, Charlotte County Administrator

Progress is continuing on the widening of Midway Boulevard, despite the heavy recent rains. The new storm drainage system is completed from Achilles Street to Kings Highway on the south side of the road and crews are installing concrete storm drain in various locations on the north side.

More than 4,000 feet of 48-inch gravity sewer lines have been installed near Achilles and crews are currently installing stormwater drainage systems along the side streets entering Midway Boulevard near Willoughby Street, as well as dewatering systems along various areas of the project. Another crew is installing the storm drain systems at Port Charlotte Middle School, where a temporary roadway is being constructed off Orlando Boulevard for parent pick-up and drop-off.

The section between Achilles and Kings Highway is expected to be open with two lanes prior to Thanksgiving.

For information about the project, visit MidwayUpdate.com.

Transfer stations

In response to input from customers, we have modified our mini-transfer station policy to allow residents up to 12 visits each year. The maximum total cubic footage of waste per year will remain at 18 cubic yards.

Charlotte County operates two recycling and transfer stations, one at 19675 Kenilworth Boulevard, in Port Charlotte and one at 7070 Environmental Way in Englewood. Nearly 50,000 residents per year take advantage of this free, convenient service.

The facilities accept recyclables, such as cardboard, paper, aluminum glass and plastics, as well as special wastes, such as paints, pesticides, batteries, motor and cooking oils, filters and tires. We also accept wallboard, insulation, yard trimmings and landscaping waste. The facilities also accept furniture and appliances, many of which are available for resale at Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies' Project REUSE stores.

For information about the mini-transfer stations, as well as instructions for scheduling curbside bulk and electronic waste pick-ups, visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click Garbage & Recycling under Popular Links.

Beach deal

TripAdvisor ranked Port Charlotte as the most affordable beach community on Florida's west coast. The travel website's story "Summer Savings: 24 Most Affordable Florida West Coast Beaches" analyzed the average cost for a weeklong stay in a two-bedroom property between

May 2016 and September 2016, and found that Port Charlotte costs travelers an average of \$637 per week. Englewood was No. 5 with an average weekly rental cost of \$903.

The website will be promoting this list through all of its media outlets over the next few months. The story announcing its analysis stated, "Don't forget to pack your golf bag and tackle box; with 165 miles of waterways and seven golf courses, this area is as sought-after for its leisurely pastimes as its scenic beaches." The blurb for Englewood stated, "Englewood has clean, beautiful beaches with excellent facilities, clear water and stunning shells; it's the ideal spot for a family vacation."

That's wonderful, free publicity for our community and the emphasis on summer travel dovetails perfectly with our tourism development strategy of maximizing our marketing dollars to boost off-season visits. TripAdvisor touts itself as the world's largest travel site, with more than 200 million reviews from travelers around the world.

Media coverage

Central Florida News 13 and Tampa Bay News 9 "Florida on a Tankful" TV reporter Scott Fais filmed two stories in Charlotte County on June 22 and 23. One was about the snorkeling eco-venture trips offered in Gasparilla Sound with the Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserves and the other was about Octagon Wildlife Sanctuary. The first story is expected to air next month on these 24-hour news stations, which reach more than 2 million households in Tampa Bay and Central Florida. His trip was coordinated by the Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau and he is planning a return trip in July. He has filmed several other segments over the last few years and this type of media coverage keeps Charlotte County visible in key feeder markets and encourages visitation to the destination.

Park plans

Major upgrades at two popular parks are in the works. Installation of floating docks and seawall construction is scheduled to begin next month. The low-profile docks are ideal for boaters, especially kayakers and canoeists, as well as disabled mariners. The same type of docks, which were built for the 2012 International Association for Disabled Sailing World Championships, have been used for dragon boat racers elsewhere in the county. Park staff are discussing the potential for using the new docks for training and possibly hosting future dragon boat races at the beach.

Plans for improvements at Spring Lake Park include replacement of boardwalk deck, work on the retention pond, and installation of seawall in the parking area. The plans are expected to be finalized this week.

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