

Charlotte County update for 9/7/16

County app a valuable resource during storm

By Ray Sandrock, Charlotte County Administrator

Hurricane Hermine thankfully missed Charlotte County, and our thoughts are with our fellow Floridians who were affected by the storm. We certainly know what they are going through and what they will be facing in the coming days and weeks as they begin their recovery and rebuilding.

Charlotte County escaped the brunt of the storm, but did experience widespread flooding. Crews from our Public Works and Utilities departments worked around the clock to clear debris from culverts, drain sewer lines infiltrated by stormwater and respond to citizen notifications and media inquiries about high water. Staff from our Community Development Department responded to concerns about potential wind-blown debris, including political signs left over from last week's primary election, and monitored further erosion on Manasota Key.

During any emergency, communication is critical and one of our most useful tools is the Charlotte County FL app, which was used frequently by residents to report flooding last week and again over the weekend. We appreciate all the extra eyes out there directing our crews to trouble spots.

The free app, which is available for iPhone and Android devices through their app stores, allows users to report problems and provide an exact location and photos of the incident. They also can track the county's response.

The app has many other features, including timely lightning alerts from county pools, trail guides for environmental parks, tourism information and a live feed from CC-TV. Users can also make and cancel rides on Charlotte County Transit via an email link on the app.

More than 1,200 people have already downloaded the app and we encourage anyone with a smartphone to do so. For information and app store links, go to www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click Get the App in the Hot Topics list. Residents can always call Public Works at 941-575-3600 or Utilities at 941-764-4300.

AED registration

Does your business or employer have an AED, an automated external defibrillator? Charlotte County Fire/EMS is compiling a database of AED locations so emergency dispatchers who receive 911 calls involving victims of heart-related incidents can direct callers to an AED if it is available.

There are dozens of AEDs available at public places, including county and Charlotte County Sheriff's Office facilities, schools and in the City of Punta Gorda. Businesses are buying these affordable, portable lifesavers in case their employees or customers need them. Knowing where they are located and who the primary contact is at the business could mean the difference between life and death and we encourage business owners to register their AEDs.

AED location forms are available online and can be emailed, faxed or mailed to Fire/EMS. To get a form, visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click Fire Rescue/EMS under Departments. To email the online form, follow the directions on the form. Printed forms can be faxed to 941-833-5630 or mailed to Charlotte County Fire/EMS, 26571 Airport Rd., Punta Gorda, Fla., 33982.

For information about the AED registration program, call 941-833-5600.

Media mention

The Weston's WannaB Inn was featured favorably in the German publication called America Journal, a magazine for German-speaking travelers planning trips to the U.S. The publication, which has a circulation of 38,500, focuses on practical travel information and trip planning. The article was a direct result of the Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau hosting travel journalist Holger Jacobs, who stayed at the WannaB Inn last September. In addition to this article, the journalist generated previous articles about the destination and highlighted the area's ecotourism, which is something German travelers actively seek out when planning a holiday.

Commission meeting

The County Commission resumes its twice-monthly meetings Sept. 13 after its August recess. Among the topics on the agenda are a public hearing on an ordinance regulating newspaper racks, an update on the county's response to the Zika virus outbreak in Florida and a presentation on the design of the widening of Olean Boulevard in Parkside.

The meeting is scheduled for 9 a.m. in Room 119 of the Charlotte County Administration Center, 18500 Murdock Circle in Port Charlotte. The meeting will be televised live on CC-TV (Comcast channel 20 or 97, CenturyLink Prism channel 96 or online at www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov/CCTV) and replayed during the week on CC-TV. All commission meetings are available on demand on the CC-TV page on our website.

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