

## **County making progress on hurricane recovery**

By Hector Flores

We continue to make progress on recovery from the storms that have impacted Charlotte County. We recently reopened the gymnasium at Ann and Chuck Dever Regional Park recreation center that has been closed for repairs due to damage from Hurricane Ian. We will soon be able to open portions of Port Charlotte Beach Park, including the tennis and basketball courts, playground and a parking area.

Safety fencing has been erected around the recreation center and pool as our contractor prepares to demolish these facilities in preparation for them to be replaced. Voters approved funding to replace both facilities with revenue from the 1% local option sales tax in November 2020. Both boat ramp lanes remain closed, but we will be working with a contractor to remove sand and debris that will enable us to open one lane as soon as possible.

The sand sifting operation in the Englewood Beach parking lot is also moving along, with about two-thirds of the approximately 400,000 cubic yards of sand having been replaced onto the beach. As that operation continues, we will be discussing with the county commission a beach renourishment and shoreline stabilization project from the Charlotte-Sarasota county line to Stump Pass Beach state park. Time is of the essence for the project because of the approaching turtle nesting season.

Debris collection continues as our contractor makes its final pass to gather remaining debris, with the exception of an upcoming collection on Little Gasparilla Island and ongoing waterway debris collection. Our debris contractor has collected 308,666 cubic yards of vegetative, construction and demolition debris during this operation.

A Business Recovery Center is open at the Port Charlotte Town Center mall to assist residents affected by Hurricanes Helene and Milton. The center, located at 1441 Tamiami Trail in Port Charlotte (across from Rack Room Shoes), provides SBA assistance to businesses and residents who sustained economic losses from either hurricane.

The BRC is open from 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Monday-Friday, and from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday. The BRC is closed on Sundays. Charlotte County Transit Services is offering free rides to and from the BRC. To schedule a ride, call 941-575-4000 and select Option 1 or book the ride through the Charlotte Rides mobile app.

### **Tire Amnesty Day**

Keep Charlotte Beautiful will be hosting a Tire Amnesty Day event from 8 a.m.-12 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 25 at the Charlotte County Administration Center parking lot located at 18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL.

Charlotte County residents can drop off a maximum of 12 car and truck tires (22 in. or less) with proof of Charlotte County residency. No commercial tires will be accepted at the event.

For full details on this event and others, please visit [www.keepcharlottebeautiful.org](http://www.keepcharlottebeautiful.org) or [email Rhonda.Harvey@charlottecountyfl.gov](mailto:Rhonda.Harvey@charlottecountyfl.gov).

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