

## **Charlotte County Weekly Update for 5/23/08 by Roger Baltz**

Commissioner D'Aprile, Robert Hebert, and myself met with Dr. Bradshaw, president of Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU). We discussed FGCU's plans for southwest Florida generally and for Charlotte County specifically. Our intention was to introduce ourselves and make clear that we have a strong interest in higher education programs and facilities for our County.

Our County Commissioners selected the projects to be funded by the proposed extension of the local option sales tax. The projects chosen are four roads critical to addressing traffic congestion and/or hurricane evacuation: Burnt Store Road, Edgewater Blvd., Midway Blvd. and C.R. 775/Placida Road. Also included are 50 sidewalk projects which will complete our program of sidewalks around schools for the safety of our children. The Commissioners are asking residents for a six year extension. The referendum will appear on the August 26 primary election ballot.

Our County Budget department has received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association.

Our Building and Construction Services Department worked very closely with Habitat for Humanity this past week to assist them with their "Blitz Build". The Blitz resulted in five houses being built in one week. We provided the necessary construction inspectors on-site to help them achieve this goal.

Information Technology staff have completed the Land Parcel Conversion and Maintenance System project. The conversion allows for up-to-date land information to be made available to the public from the County IT/GIS Department and the Property Appraiser's Office more efficiently.

The County recently enacted a commercial fertilizer ordinance that will aid applicators in understanding the impact of fertilizer on our water resources and environment. Green Industries Best Management Practices Training is now available. Commercial fertilizer applicators must attend in order to receive their certification in the new application methods. For more information on training classes call 764.4360.

Our thanks go out to residents who participated in the Postal Carrier Food Drive. Over 2,240 pounds of food was donated through the Postal Food Drive to the County's food pantry program. The supplies will be distributed to needy individuals and families in Charlotte County.

Our Utilities staff is continuing working on a plan to provide reclaimed water to the Charlotte Sports Park for irrigation of the baseball fields. By using reclaimed water, over time, we will save millions of gallons of potable (drinking) water.

Our County received two checks from the Florida Recreation and Development Assistance Program (FRDAP) to help pay for construction at Sunrise Park and North Charlotte Regional Park. The sales tax dollars allocated to both of these parks have allowed the County to leverage for matching grants. Each of the grants is for \$200,000.