

Charlotte County Weekly Update for 6/27/08

By Roger Baltz

Our Building Construction Services department was well represented on the radio last week. Jim Evetts, the department director, represented the departments involved in development. Building Code Supervisor Erin Mullen-Travis participated on a weekly program that focuses on the construction industry, to discuss unlicensed contractors and rules and regulations surrounding contractors.

Exterior construction at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center is essentially complete. Therefore, when you drive by you will not see much new construction as the project moves to the interior.

The Charlotte County Fire / EMS Department conducted an in-service Fire Safety Inspection Survey of all commercial businesses within the County. This is in accordance with the County's Fire Prevention Code Section 3-3-9. These inspections are done with on-duty engine companies visiting local businesses. The inspections help businesses recognize fire safety issues and prevent loss of property due to fires.

Our Risk Management Division of Human Resources negotiated a waiver of transfer fee with Blue Cross Blue Shield, saving \$5,000. This fee was charged to transfer all of our employee and dependent's prescriptions over to AETNA's Rx system.

Our Human Services department received its 2008 monitoring review of the State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) Program conducted by First Housing on behalf of the State. The County received a perfect score of 100% compliance. SHIP provides funding for down payment assistance, new homeowner construction, new rental construction, homeowner rehabilitation assistance, foreclosure and community land trust programs.

The newly established Family Services Center Advisory Board met for the first time. The advisory board is working on establishing a separate 501(c)3 organization for the purpose of seeking capital grants and private foundation funding for capital and programs for the Family Services Center.

Leading technology company CDW will be publishing an article in their July issue of *State Tech* about our Information Technology Department's use of server virtualization. The server virtualization project has saved the County over \$381,434 dollars.

The summer reading program for youth is underway at County Libraries. Our Library staff has given out over 500 reading logs on which children and families can track their summer reading time and receive incentives for hours read. Weekly programs are ongoing at the Punta Gorda Library through June 26 and Englewood and Mid County Libraries through July.

The mural "Movie Memories" received approval to be recreated at the new Charlotte County Event and Conference Center. The original mural was destroyed in the hurricanes of 2004. Work will begin after Labor Day and fundraising has already begun. Donations should be sent to the Punta Gorda Historic Mural Society.

Our Public Works department is moving forward with the replacement of the two water control structures on Quesada Boulevard. The total project is approximately 50% complete. One structure is located at the Dorchester Waterway and Quesada Boulevard, and the other is located at the Morningstar Waterway and Quesada Boulevard. The water control structures are scheduled to be completed October 2008. Additionally, the Public Works staff is currently working with the Army Corps of Engineers and US Fish & Wildlife Service in obtaining the Army Corps Permit required for the Aqui Esta Project.

Our Utilities department hosted Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center's Peace River Basin Teachers' Water Resource Workshop at the Burnt Store Reverse Osmosis Water Treatment Facility. Local educators enjoyed a presentation on Charlotte County Utilities operations, water supply and treatment and hydrogeology, as well as tours of the Water Treatment Facility and Water Reclamation Facility.

Utilities staff viewed a presentation by the 21st Century Hydrant Company on a new, portable fire hydrant system. This technology could have future applications in large-scale developments such as Babcock Ranch and could offer considerable savings in maintenance costs and improvements in emergency response times.