

Charlotte County Weekly Update for 07/11/2008
By Roger Baltz

On Saturday, July 12 at 8:30 a.m. ESPN2 will be broadcasting the final weigh in and crowning the winner of April's Oh Boy! Oberto Redfish Cup stop in Charlotte Harbor. The first half of the competition aired on July 5. ESPN2 is broadcast into 96 million households. By hosting the event the community has enjoyed national attention and a financial boost from the event's economic impact.

Over the last three months Keep Charlotte Beautiful engaged 2,538 volunteers in numerous activities. Volunteers donated 6,883 hours and picked up 387,534 pounds of trash on land and waterways. They pulled weeds, mulched and planted trees and plants to beautify public spaces and school grounds, as well as collecting cans and newspapers to recycle.

County Commissioners and staff have attended several meetings to present penny sales tax extension information and answer questions. A video has been prepared on the program and will be available for viewing on CCTV and on our County website. Organizations and groups can contact the County Administration office at 743-1944 to schedule a presentation.

Our County will begin exotic vegetation control on six islands located in Spring Lake and Manchester Waterway. This work is being performed as part of a mitigation project required by the State Department of Environmental Protection and the United States Army Corp of Engineers for the removal of the Manchester Waterway boat lock.

Solar tinting has been installed to the windows at the Justice Center in Punta Gorda and the Administrative Center in Murdock, which should reduce energy costs by up to 15%.

In March our County joined the National Association of County's Prescription Drug Discount Card Program. Reports for the first 90 days indicated that our residents saved a total of \$12,479 on prescription drugs with an average savings of 17%. Approximately 250 individual users participated in both April and May. The free Drug Discount Card may be obtained at many locations throughout Charlotte County including the Public Libraries, Health Department and the Human Services Department.

Charlotte County has received a grant of \$286,000 to digitize photographs and documents important to our local and family histories and other genealogy materials. A project manager will oversee the three year project and we will be forming a digitization selection committee to choose the items to be digitized. The goal is to scan over 23,000 items by 2011.

Our County Purchasing Department has received the prestigious 2008 Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award.

We are working in partnership with Florida Power & Light to add trees to our County parks. FPL worked on a project that required that they provide off-site mitigation for trees being removed from the site. We are now looking for suitable locations for the approximately 80 trees that will be planted at our parks thanks to FPL.

Charlotte County Utilities recently completed Florida Department of Environmental Protection mandated lead and copper sampling in its Burnt Store service area. Once every three years, utilities are required to collect water samples from inside customers' homes to test for the presence of lead and copper, which could be caused by lead solder used in copper plumbing. We extend our thanks to the 70 customers who participated in this important sampling process

Our County Commission held the kick off to our comprehensive plan process, called Smart Charlotte 2050. Smart Charlotte will be a blueprint for how we live, work and play in Charlotte County. This planning process will shape our future, so community participation is vital to its success. The next public event is July 22 at 6:00 p.m. when we will hold a Visioning Workshop at the Port Charlotte Beach Recreation Center. Please join us to learn more about the process and to share your thoughts and concerns about Charlotte County's future. More information will be available on our County website at www.CharlotteCountyFL.com.

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