

Charlotte County Weekly Update for 8/8/2008

By Roger Baltz

Our County Emergency Management Department conducted a continuity of operations exercise with the Transportation Security Administration at the County's Emergency Operations Center. More than 25 employees of the TSA from southwest Florida's airports participated in the three hour drill to test their capabilities.

Our new 40 acre Sunrise Park has now opened on Edgewater Road in Port Charlotte. This park preserves the waterfront and creates a destination on the linear parkway in the Port Charlotte area. The Florida Communities Trust Grant funded the acquisition of this land. The 1998 Sales Tax, Park Impact Fees and the Florida Recreation and Development Assistance Program grant built the park. The park contains a canoe/kayak launch area, pathways, tennis courts, and other features for our citizens use.

Our Commissioners met to review the capital improvement program (CIP) for the coming fiscal year. The County projects in areas of transportation (roads), parks, utilities, and facilities were identified. Details are available for review on the County web site at www.charlottecountyfl.com.

Pamela Baker, County Grants Analyst, was appointed by Governor Crist to serve a four year term on the Local Advocacy Council (LAC) as a Member at Large for Mental Health. The LAC provides human rights advocacy in cooperation with local and state agencies to improve both the quality of life for people with mental illnesses and the quality of the human services programs they require.

The County Economic Development Office has been working with other area Economic Development Offices to establish a regional approach, which will be a business recruitment asset for all. A Request For Quotation for a regional brand was issued and 30 responses have been received. The selection will be made by the middle of August.

The Green Industries Best Management Practices Training sessions are on-going. At these sessions residents and commercial applicators can learn more about the County's new Fertilizer Ordinance. To date, 106 Commercial individuals have participated and increased their understanding of the local County Ordinance. Our Training Schedule for commercial applicators continues with a class on August 23rd (a Saturday) and September 18th at the East Port Environmental Campus from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The cost is \$25.00 which includes lunch. Additionally, there will be a free training for homeowners on August 21. For more information, please call 941.764.4340.

The Deputy Director for the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, Tallahassee, made a site visit to the Charlotte County Family Services Center as a result of the Charlotte County Shared Youth Vision program report and presentation. During her visit, some innovative ideas for engaging youth in future workforce programs at an early age, encouraging private business to embrace youth as future workforce leaders, and further development of the "youth one-stop" model were discussed.

Our Public Works department has now received the Notice To Proceed from the state of Florida to officially begin the AQUI Esta road project. Based on the notice we have now advertised the bids.

Our Utilities department has completed a new wastewater collection system to serve the Pirate Harbor community. Construction began in September 2007, was completed in June 2008 and the system has now been permitted for use by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). Pirate Harbor customers can request connection to the system at any time and will be receiving written notification in the next week or so, including the procedure and fees for connection. CCU staff is ready to assist these homeowners to accomplish the connections as quickly and efficiently as possible.