

## **Administrator's Update for 12/12/2008**

### **By Roger Baltz**

The County budget and overall financial issues continue to be a priority topic throughout our County government. Our County Commissioners had their first briefing on the 2009/2010 fiscal year budget process at a recent board meeting. The Commissioners received an update on past budget actions and an overview of the expected revenue shortfalls for next year. At this meeting our Commissioners determined that performance based budgeting will be the best method to use for our budget preparations for the coming year. Our staff will be bringing forward the detailed processes and forms to be used in the coming weeks for review and direction from our Commissioners.

Mosquito Control's surveillance program has concluded its weekly Sentinel Chicken sampling for mosquito-borne diseases, routinely monitored from April through November. This mosquito season, Charlotte County did not experience the presence of mosquito borne diseases. Mosquito Control has 9 flocks of chickens located throughout the county. Blood samples are taken each week and sent to the State of Florida Health Department lab in Tampa. There the blood is tested for mosquito transmitted diseases such as, but not limited to West Nile Virus, St. Louis Encephalitis, and Eastern Equine Encephalitis. The information is used by the mosquito control program, the State Health Department, and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to identify areas of the county which have disease transmission occurring.

County employees have donated a total of 364 units of blood this year. Employees also organized a food drive that had our food bins overflowing. All food collected went to local families through our Human Services food pantry.

The Charlotte County Veteran's Office is collecting books for the Wounded Warrior Project. In conjunction with Books-a-Million, and through the generous donations of private citizens, 176 new books were gathered to be distributed to wounded veterans. These books will be delivered to the Douglas T. Jacobson VA Nursing Home, Bay Pines VA Medical Center and James T. Haley VA Hospital. All of these facilities serve Charlotte County veterans.

Our Family Services Center has partnered with the US Census Bureau to make unemployed clients aware of available openings with the Census Bureau. These positions are temporary; however, compensation is competitive and most positions will be employed until May 2010. The Census Bureau is hiring approximately 1,000 individuals in Charlotte County.

The County's' new "Occupation of Easement" process is working well. The revised policy has reduced both the fee and the processing time for fence permits. Prior to revamping the process, a typical application would take 4 to 6 weeks to complete. Currently, review times are running two weeks or less. This change was the result of residents asking that we review the process to look at ways to make improvements.

We have completed the necessary land acquisitions required for the improvements of the Toledo Blade/Hillsborough Boulevards intersection. This project is being managed by our Public Works Department in concert with the City of North Port. Total land acquisition costs were approximately \$55,000, well below the established \$ 100,000 budget.

The Visitor's Bureau delivered a presentation during the Englewood Cape Haze Chamber of Commerce First Annual Tourism Development Conference on Nov. 13. Staff members offered ways industry partners can utilize Bureau initiatives to grow tourism business, such as through hosting travel journalists, creating travel packages, and participating in cooperative advertising. More than 80 members of the area's tourism industry attended.

Waste Management is in the process of completing the final deliveries of the new green garbage carts. We sincerely appreciate your patience as we endeavored to deliver 75,000 carts in a very short time frame. If you have any questions about our new automated garbage program or would like a smaller cart than the one that was delivered to your residence, call the hotline at 941.883.3533.

The Charlotte County Sports Park Stadium is nearing completion. We have received the certificate of occupancy (CO) on the new 42, 000 square foot clubhouse. This facility is the operational base for the Rays as they begin their spring training program in 2009. We also expect to have a CO on the stadium itself within the next two weeks.