

Administrator's Update for 7/31/09

By Roger Baltz

Our Building Official, Jim Evetts, is meeting with members of the Charlotte County Historical Society, and the community, regarding the El Jobean Hotel. They are working together to develop a plan to preserve the hotel and address safety concerns until funding is available to rehabilitate it.

Public Works has completed the installation of the first layer of asphalt on the Toledo Blade Boulevard Widening project, as well as the beautification gateway on Toledo Blade from US 41 to SR 776.

Our Facilities Department has reviewed the 2009 year end electricity cost projections for cost centers controlled by that section of our operations. This would include buildings such as the Justice Center, Jail Complex, Administration Complex, Emergency Operations Center, etc. With three months left to be billed we are looking at a savings of \$908,837 for the current year. Combined with reductions of \$542,000 last year-this gives us a two-year reduction of a little over \$1.4 million dollars. This is all part of an energy efficiency strategy that we began to implement in 2007. Our staff is also preparing additional energy efficiency strategies which will be presented to our Commissioners in the coming weeks.

Ruth Buchanan, from our Economic Development Office, concluded a successful trade mission to the North America Intersolar Conference this month in San Francisco. She was able to follow up with German business prospects that she met in Munich in May, and establish new prospects among the many major solar players in the trade show.

The Charlotte County Fire/EMS Department and the Sheriff's Department have begun cross-training personnel on the Sheriff's Department Marine Units. This training will help expand fire and medical coverage on the County's waterways. The goal of this training is to decrease response times involving water emergencies.

Our GIS department has been working with the State of Florida to update our Essential Facilities database utilizing special multi-hazard loss estimation software provided by FEMA. This information will be used to assess damage for FEMA reimbursement in the event of disaster.

The County has applied for a construction grant under the FEMA Assistance for Firefighters Grant Program. The grant allows for the construction of new fire stations and the renovation of existing stations. Under this grant the County applied to renovate Fire Station 6 in Punta Gorda, at a cost of \$700,000. We will be notified in October of 2009 if we are a qualified recipient.

Our Human Services staff has collaborated with several community agencies in Jail Diversion/Discharge planning. The local agencies have an important role in educating inmates about the available services in the community prior to their discharge. This is a critical step in stopping recidivism.

Our Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center presented the "Florida in Full Bloom" Plant & Garden show. There were over 25 exhibitors and various special presentations. The event was attended by over 1500 people.

Our Utilities Department has initiated a corrosion control program for the water distribution system in the Burnt Store service area due to the high salt content of the brackish ground water in that area and the effect it had on metallic surfaces in the pipeline system. After eight months of the program, water quality tests have revealed that the corrosion rate at most test sites was reduced by 50% or greater. This positive result lends itself to a better tasting water product for our customers.