

Administrator's Update for 11/17/10
By Raymond J. Sandroock, County Administrator

There are exciting times ahead for Charlotte County with two new commissioners joining the Board this week. The new Board members were officially sworn in on Nov. 16 and their first Board meeting will be held on Nov. 23.

Economic Development

We continue to work on several major economic development interests in Charlotte County. These have the potential for new jobs and economic enhancement to the whole Community. We are thankful to the voters for passing the referendum for tax exemptions for new businesses that meet certain criteria. I believe this will be a useful tool to offer those seeking to bring a new business or expand an existing business.

Budget Process

We are about to begin early discussion with the Board on the budget process for next year. The process will include building strategic goals which will drive and help align the FY10/11 draft budget. We anticipate another year of reduced property tax revenues but have several options to deal with the issue. Charlotte County Commissioners and staff continue to develop creative solutions.

Veteran Stand Down

The Sixth Annual Homeless Veteran Stand Down was held Oct. 30th at our Charlotte County Family Services Center. Thirty veterans and two non-veterans were assisted by our Veteran Services Division staff and 80 community volunteers. Assistance provided included new clothes and shoes, hair cuts, flu shots, medical exams and mental health assessments, personal hygiene items, enrollment in the VA health care system, non-perishable food items and a hot luncheon meal. Over \$14,000 in donations, goods and services provided assistance for this event.

Service Award

Our Building and Growth Management Department has been awarded a Service Excellence Impact Award by Charlotte County Habitat for Humanity for the work they have done assisting with building permits, plans reviews and inspections. The award was presented at the recent Charlotte County Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Appreciation dinner.

Training Event

Our Human Services Department has coordinated a training event "The Accountable Case Manager" which is being held December 8 and 9 at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center. This grant-funded training provides national certification as a Case Manager. Attendees, including Human Services staff, will gain knowledge in evidence-based program accountability with the focus on assisting low-income clients move toward self-sufficiency and goal achievements. Since announcing the event statewide, and with the support and endorsement of the Department of Community Affairs, the class has filled and now has a waiting list.

Trestle Debris

Recently Charlotte County Public Works crews removed dilapidated and rotten wood from the Boca Grande Bridge, trestle section. This work was done as a precaution and to eliminate navigational hazards at the fishing piers that run parallel to the Boca Grande Bridge. The debris removed included 150 feet of the fender system, 25 pilings, two 75-foot long upper railroad trusses, and 15 railroad ties. The fishing piers are maintained by our Charlotte County Community Services Department and, after inspection were deemed structurally sound and in good condition.

Educational Workshops

Growth Management Staff has been helping to conduct several educational workshops in conjunction with the Environmental Justice Small Grant that we recently received from the Environmental Protection Agency. Workshop activities include Florida Friendly landscaping and rainbarrel demonstrations by our Extension Service Staff, a water treatment and conservation demonstration by Utilities Staff, and ground water infiltration by Building Division Staff. Workshops were conducted at The Academy and Port Charlotte High School among other locations.

Healthy Kids Festival

Our Charlotte County Community Services Department hosted the Second Annual Healthy Kids Festival on October 23 at the Harold Avenue Recreation Center. Over 40 different agencies gathered together to provide information on health, wellness, and fun to families with children from preschool age to fifth grade. The festival had over 400 participants in attendance.

Sports Market Project

Charlotte Harbor and the Gulf Islands has been selected as one of 40 locations from across the country to participate in a sports market economic impact project. The study, which will be conducted by the University of Arizona in conjunction with the National Association of Sports Commissions, will be customized to each individual market whereby data from a previous event in our market will be analyzed along with data to be captured at a to-be-determined event in spring of 2011. Our destination will be assigned a group of graduate-level marketing students from the university who will work with the Charlotte Harbor Visitor and Convention Bureau staff to develop a communications and marketing plan to include ideas on how to best use the data, who to share it with, and how to effectively communicate the findings.