

Charlotte



Shines

YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK

Charlotte County Courthouse Update



When the Charlotte County Courthouse was originally dedicated on March 20, 1928 it quickly became the centerpiece of downtown Punta Gorda. The new courthouse was built with elements borrowed from Roman and Greek architecture. This Neo-Classical style was characterized by symmetrical arrangements including large pediments and columns that created a grandiose facade and entrance. All county government operations including the county jail were located in the courthouse.

This year the Board of County Commissioners approved plans to restore and renovate this historic building. Design work began in February 2006 and a construction contract was approved in November. Commissioners helped kick off the reconstruction with a bang on December 20 at the Reconstruction Celebration. The cost of this project is estimated at \$5.6 million with a grand opening expected in October 2007. The new occupants will be the Supervisor of Elections and courtrooms.



Cochran Boulevard Dedication

On October 30, 2006, a portion of Toledo Blade Boulevard was renamed Cochran Boulevard. Cochran Boulevard was dedicated to Private First Class Robert L. Cochran; the only Marine killed in WWII from Charlotte County. He died on July 8, 1944 at the young age of 23. After his death, he was awarded the Purple Heart, Bronze Star, and the Asiatic-Pacific Medal.

PFC Cochran's surviving brother; James Cochran was the guest of honor along with Charlotte County Commissioner Tom D'Aprile, Port Charlotte High School Color Guard, and the Marine Corps League Detachment #756 Rifle Squad. Over 100 area Vets attended the ceremony.



Manasota Key Construction Update

After a number of years of planning and design the improvements to Beach Road on Manasota Key are now complete. The addition of a round-about to the intersection with Gulf Boulevard offers an opportunity to provide a "beach feature" as an introduction to the island.

A seashell sculpture was created by a local artist and installed in the center of the round-about. Turtle-friendly ornamental street lights, new sidewalks, and extensive landscaping have created a very inviting place to live and visit.

Charlotte County Family Services Center Open House

Charlotte County Family Services Center held an open house and tour on January 10. This facility, located on Gibraltar Drive in Port Charlotte, was purchased for \$1.2 million in 2005, and was previously the First Christian Church.

The Center's purpose is to provide programs and services for Charlotte County children and their families including the Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County, Parenting Program & Nurturing Dads, and the 4-H Program.

In addition to regular programs the facility has an auditorium and conference room available for public use. Please contact Emily Lewis, Center Manager at 941.235.0159 for rental information.



Conservation Charlotte: Environmentally Sensitive Lands



In November 2006 county residents approved the referendum that created a program called Conservation Charlotte. They agreed to a special tax that would fund the purchase of environmentally sensitive lands. As part of the program the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners will be soliciting volunteers for the environmentally sensitive lands oversight committee. This committee will make recommendations to the Board regarding specific properties to be purchased.

Lands that will be purchased as environmentally sensitive land will have to go through a process to see what lands would be the most beneficial. Lands acquired under this program will include wetlands, rare or high-quality uplands, wildlife corridors (lands that link existing preserves), and other lands that provide habitat for rare or endangered species. These lands protect our local native wildlife including Florida panthers, bald eagles, Florida black bears, and manatees.

Charlotte County Environmental and Extension Services Receives Grant

Charlotte County Environmental and Extension Services received a \$41,880 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation that will help fund a program to identify the harmful effects of artificial lighting on sea turtles. This program will identify lighting impacts on nesting turtles and educate the public on the effects of artificial lightings.

This grant will allow for the replacement of 120 exterior lighting fixtures with less harmful lights at the Colony of Don Pedro Condominium reducing the artificial light on nesting habitats. A mitigation fund will be set up to assist our coastal neighbors in funding 50% of the cost to replace their harmful lighting with "Turtle Friendly Lights" if their lights are deemed a hazard to nesting sea turtles.



Spring Training Is Back In Charlotte County

On September 20 Charlotte County and the Tampa Bay Devil Rays formally agreed to “play ball” by signing an agreement to move the Devil Rays spring training to Charlotte Sports Park. The cost of renovating the stadium is projected at \$27.2 million and will consist of renovations including a 360-degree concourse, a grass field for general admission seating, a new clubhouse in the outfield, and a new suite level. The first spring training game is expected to be in 2009.

On January 2, 2007 Charlotte County was awarded a \$15 million grant to be used for renovations to the stadium at Charlotte Sports Park. This grant comes from the Florida Sports Foundation and the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development. Additional funding will come from the 5th cent of the Tourist Tax, with collection to begin in spring 2007.

The Tampa Bay Devil Rays also donated a \$5,000 scholarship to the Kids Camp Connection which sends area children to summer camp. This is the first of several community donations expected over the next 20 year partnership with the Devil Rays.



Charlotte Shines is distributed quarterly by the Charlotte County Government.

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If you have any questions or comments, we would love to hear from you. You can contact the Communications & Marketing Department at Communications@CharlotteCountyFL.com or call 941.623.1092.