



ON THE *Move*

A Quarterly Update From Your City Hall

City Begins Design of New Public Safety Facility

As the population of Cape Coral continues to grow, the demand also increases for police and fire services. The City is preparing to build a new public safety building to house police and fire personnel, who have run out of space at the old City Hall building. The old City Hall building is inadequate, and structural problems, leaking roofs and mold prompted the City to pursue a new building.

Initial design work on the new facility began in August. This facility will meet the needs of the Police and Fire departments through the year 2025. The building will be constructed to withstand a Category 5 hurricane, which will enable emergency workers to maintain operations during and after a severe storm. The facility will be connected to the existing Emergency Operations Center, enabling emergency staff to access the EOC during a storm without being exposed to the elements.

The new Public Safety Facility will be four levels and provide about 195,000 square feet of space, including 21,500 square feet of shell space for future use. The facility will accommodate all Police Department divisions and Fire Administration. Additional amenities include a large community meeting room, a central plaza for outdoor activities, and a new and improved Reflections Park.

The Master Planning and Schematic Design phases of the project are almost complete. The Design Development Phase is next, which will focus on the selection of material and systems. The final documents will be completed in the latter part of 2006 with a 14-18 month construction period anticipated. The new facility will be constructed adjacent to the existing Public Safety Facility. The City will be bringing forward a General Obligation Bond for public approval to finance the new facility. After the new facility is completed, the original structure will be demolished and the site developed for parking and other necessary components.

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Lawn Irrigation Limited to Two Days per Week

City will enforce tighter water conservation schedule

Water is a limited resource in Cape Coral especially during the annual dry season. In February 2005, City Council approved tighter watering restrictions that limit residential irrigation to two days each week.

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Mayor's Message

Eight months have now passed since I began serving as Mayor of Cape Coral. During those eight months many exciting changes have transpired as our City continues to grow at an accelerated rate.

One area that is experiencing explosive changes is the Pine Island Road/SR 78 corridor. The Lee County Metropolitan Planning Council recently voted to support the expansion of Pine Island Road/SR 78 from a two-lane to a four-lane roadway. Their support of this expansion was a great victory for the City of Cape Coral and was made possible through the dedicated work of our City and County elected officials, and City staff who diligently pursued the support of the Lee County Metropolitan Planning Council for this project. This road improvement will not only allow for better traffic flow but will also serve as an evacuation route in the event of a hurricane or other emergencies.

With the end of hurricane season, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on our most recent hurricane, Hurricane Wilma - a storm that dealt a glancing blow to our city as it trekked across the southern part of the state. Although this storm event was not as intense as Hurricane Charley, it still produced damaging winds and extensive rain.

One of my goals during the hurricane was to be available to the command team and assist as needs arose. Additionally, I was determined to assure that the lines of communication remained open and informative to our citizens. This was accomplished through interviews arranged by our communications team with major media outlets, including Fox, CNN and MSNBC. I felt



it was imperative to get information to our residents on a regular and timely basis, so we enlisted the assistance of our CapeTV contractor, 1Pro Media. With their help, I was able to tape regular updates to the community that aired immediately on our government access channel, Channel 14 on Time-Warner cable.

Having worked closely with the command team and emergency response personnel during Hurricane Wilma, I feel our community is in very capable hands when these types of storms impact the city. I was quite impressed with our City's emergency management team, both in how they plan and prepare for an event, and how they responded after the storm passed.

Fortunately, the 2005 hurricane season has ended; however, we now prepare for the annual dry season. Please remember that the two-day watering schedule remains in effect. Read the front page article for your days and times, and then check your timers. Code Compliance prefers not to issue citations but must do what is necessary to protect our water resources.

I look forward to continuing to serve our Citizens of Cape Coral. My door is always open.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Feichthaler".

CM's Message

Another hurricane season has ended, and Cape Coral managed to avoid any direct hits from the record number of storms this year. With all of the activity swirling in the Atlantic and Gulf, we were very fortunate that the Cape escaped some of the more serious impacts of these powerful storms.

Still, Wilma certainly gave us something to worry about when the forecasters labeled her the strongest hurricane on record. Fortunately, the storm weakened to a Category 3 by landfall and passed just to the south of our area. This hurricane did not leave us unscathed; however, the damage we experienced was significantly less than last season's Hurricane Charley.

Once again, I extend my thanks to the City employees who worked throughout the storm to make sure that life in Cape Coral returned to normal as quickly as possible. I continue to be impressed by the spirit of cooperation that occurs across departmental lines when the community interests are at stake. One example is how our City crews worked together to clean and clear Jaycee Park after Wilma wreaked havoc on the park so that our annual Kids Festival could go on as planned. I know the 5,000 people who attended the event were very appreciative of the efforts.

LCEC also did another fine job restoring power throughout the Cape in a most timely fashion, although we had some people who were without power for a few days. Yet overall, the city had lights on and signals flashing in short order, while our neighbors on the other side of the river still were without power. The quick work of LCEC created an unusual phenomenon here in Cape Coral: People from Ft. Myers were driving over the bridges to come here for dining and shopping rather than vice



versa. While it was an interesting turnabout, the influx of people from Ft. Myers did cause some longer waits at our restaurants. Still, we were happy to welcome our neighbors to our side of the river for a change.

There is one issue that I believe is important to address with regard to the hurricane season. I must admit to being disappointed by the number of residents who apparently failed to plan properly for the hurricane season. Every year, we emphasize the importance of preparation, including having at least three days of food and water on hand in the event that power is lost. Yet, a day after the hurricane, we had many residents calling for information on where to get bottled water.

I can remember when a hurricane warning had homeowners filling their bathtubs in anticipation of the arrival of the storm. Cupboards were stocked with canned foods, and people were ready to survive, and even help their neighbors, if need be. That "can do" attitude seems to have waned. When did "urgency" get replaced by "complacency?" After Hurricane Charley, I would think all of us would take the hurricane season more seriously.

The 2005 hurricane season has ended. My hope is that when the 2006 season rolls around, all of our citizens will heed the warnings to prepare properly and be ready should another storm approach. Our past experiences require that we do no less.

Thank you for your time and happy holidays.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terry Stewart".

Public Safety Facility

Continued from the cover

The Public Safety Facility covers 13.5 acres of the City's 35-acre City Hall Campus. The entire campus is being evaluated and a master plan developed. By planning now, we can ensure that City government functions have the necessary space to meet the needs of the community.



DCD Continues to Make Improvements to Commercial Permitting Process

The City's Department of Community Development is taking steps to improve the commercial permitting process for customers. The department recently reallocated personnel and worked overtime to reduce the backlog of site plans and Planned Development Project applications from more than 100 projects to 79. Reviews that were taking four months have been reduced to 45 days or less.

Management, support staff and plans examiners from all sections of the site plan review process were brought onboard for this all-out push to reduce the backlog.

To be competitive with other communities, the City must look to streamline the permitting process and meet the demands of our commercial customers. The City recently purchased project tracking software from AlphaCorp, which will allow external customers to access the status of site plan and PDP applications online. Plan review comments will be available as they are entered into the system by City personnel.

Internally, site plans and PDPs are tracked using multiple reports in an Excel database. These reports have been streamlined and the database has been reconfigured so that staff can determine how long each project has been in the system, review the status by plans reviewer, analyze daily production, etc.

To improve divisional accountability, the City initiated a weekly commercial permitting accountability meeting. This weekly meeting allows a status review of projects and identifies projects that require timely action.

The backlog of outstanding applications was created due to a lack of qualified plan reviewers. Once the department is at full staff, the plan reviews will be processed without delay to the applicants.

City Council Adds AM Radio Channel to Public Communication Tools

In the FY 2006 budget, the City Council approved the establishment of an AM radio channel for broadcasting both emergency and non-emergency information to Cape Coral residents. The radio channel will be available only in the Cape Coral geographic area.

The City will use the channel for emergency broadcasting during storm events and for other public information announcements as needed. During non-emergency times, which will cover much of the airtime, the channel will broadcast an audio stream of the programming on the City's government access channel.

"We have a responsibility to communicate information to our citizens, and this becomes more critical during emergency situations," said City Manager Terry Stewart. "Our local media must cover a broad geographic area, and our messages often get lost among a myriad of announcements from other agencies and

organizations. This radio channel will add another point of access for our citizens to get specific Cape Coral information."

During emergency events, the City can access the radio equipment stationed throughout the City and record messages for immediate broadcasting over the air. This means residents can tune into the City's radio channel and find out the latest information about curfews, road closures, traffic situations, boil water notices and conditions at City facilities.

In addition, by using the channel as an audio stream for CapeTV, residents can listen to City Council and other committee meetings on the radio in their cars or at home.

The City will provide information on the availability of the channel and the location on the AM dial in a future issue of this newsletter.

Lawn Irrigation

Continued from the cover

The emergency watering ordinance also eliminated the “warning” ticket. First violations will result in a \$25 fine. A second violation is a \$100 fine, and the third violation will cost \$200. City code compliance officers will be out early and often to ensure that residents adhere to the watering schedule.

Cape Coral's dry season begins in October and lasts through May, and during this time, the city receives minimal rainfall. Water for irrigation usage exceeded 40 million gallons per day this past year, which was far more water than necessary to keep grass green. This excessive irrigation was causing a rapid drawdown of the aquifer in the Southwest Cape. The potable water supply in an area served by private wells was being threatened by the continuing drop in the water level.

Cape Coral is experiencing rapid growth, and this growth will continue to put significant stress on the water resources available for both irrigation and domestic use. The City is developing and implementing long-range plans to address the growing demand for water. However, the benefits from these improvements may be 3-5 years away.

Please be a responsible and wise steward of our water resources and follow the watering schedule. Read the “Tips for Watering” article in this newsletter. Remember that during the winter, your lawn does not require as much water as it receives during the rainy season.

Here is the watering schedule, which is in effect year-round.

Watering Schedule

Even homes: Thursday and Sunday

Odd homes: Wednesday and Saturday

Non-residential: Monday, Wednesday and Friday

No Watering between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Maximum of 4 hours per day

Important Note

The City makes every attempt to notify the citizens about the watering schedule. We use this newsletter, which is mailed to every household and business. We put the information on our web page (www.capegov.org), and broadcast the schedule on CapeTV, Channel 14.

We also provide the information to the media. However, we encourage residents to check with us before relying solely on information they read in the newspaper. A local newspaper recently printed the following statement about watering times on the front page: “City residents can water only two days a week, between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.”

This statement is incorrect or misleading at the very least. This gives the impression that a resident can begin watering at 7 p.m. and continue until 7 a.m. Yet, if a resident follows these guidelines and begins watering on their designated day after 7 p.m. and continues past midnight into the a.m. hours, they are in violation. Because we have been unable to convince the local newspaper to clarify this, we are taking this opportunity to do so. Please review and adhere to the watering schedule printed in this article. If you have any questions, please call us at (239) 574-0425

Council Makes City Homes Available to Katrina Victims

The City Council approved the use of four City-owned structures for victims of Hurricane Katrina. The four vacant homes (three single-family homes and one duplex) were located on land purchased by the City for future projects.

The City partnered with the Cape Coral Construction Industry Association, which stepped forward to make needed repairs to the homes. The association also worked with local agencies to furnish the homes, and arrange for families to sign leases with the City and move into the structures. Families will live in the homes rent-free for a limited amount of time to give them an opportunity to gain employment and find permanent housing. The families will be allowed to take the furnishings with them when they move to another location.

The City anticipates that the properties will be available for at least one year, providing ample opportunity for the families living in the homes to get settled in the area. At that time, the City will need to demolish the homes and make room for road or property improvements.

Plans for New Arts Studio Moving Forward

Plans for the new Cape Coral Arts Studio facility, to be located in Cultural Park, continue to move forward. In a day-long workshop with the architects and the Arts Studio staff, the design of the new building was finalized.

This unique building will have a courtyard design and 20,000 square feet of space created specifically for the production and exhibition of fine arts and crafts. Some of the features of the new building include:

- Two fine-art galleries
- The only fine-art supply store in Cape Coral
- A gift shop with unique handmade items created by teachers, students and local artists
- An exhibition corridor
- Eight art labs including:
 - *a clay/stone sculpture/gemstone polishing lab*
 - *a glass lab for stained glass, fused glass and lamp-work glass*
 - *a painting lab with lots of natural northern exposure lighting*
 - *a jewelry lab, individual jewelers benches and a buffing room*
 - *drawing/mixed media lab large enough for meetings*
 - *a photo darkroom to accommodate classes and rentals*
 - *a computer lab for graphic design classes and projects*
 - *an outdoor open air welding lab for metal sculpture*
- A conference room and an outdoor kiln
- A sculpture garden

With expert attention to detail the new Arts Studio will continue to provide the largest selection of fine arts programming in Cape Coral. The City plans to break ground for the new facility in the summer of 2006 with the grand opening in the winter of 2007.



15th Annual Tour de Cape is January 13-15

The 15th Annual News-Press Tour de Cape bike ride and 5K Run will be January 13-15. The bike ride is one of Florida's largest and fastest-growing cycling events. The News-Press Tour de Cape bike ride winds through the flatlands of Cape Coral, the second largest city in Florida geographically. Cape Coral provides the perfect venue for this ride and/or run, which is designed for persons of all ages and skill levels.

All participants can pick up their goodie bags, T-shirt, water bottle and maps at the ride headquarters located at Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Road in Cape Coral. The event kicks off on Saturday, January 14, with The News-Press Tour de Cape Century Ride (100 miles) and three other routes (62, 31 and 15 miles). Participants can have a continental breakfast sponsored by The Bagel Factory. After completing the event, participants can stay for a delicious Barbeque lunch from a local restaurant.

The weekend concludes on Sunday, January 15, with the 5th Annual News-Press Tour de Cape 5K Run in the beautiful Tarpon Point area of Cape Coral. Awards will be given to the top three male and female finishers in various age categories. The events wrap up with a continental breakfast, plenty of beverages and an awards ceremony. For registration information on the Tour de Cape, call 573-3125.

Lee County Senior Games

The 17th Annual Lee County Senior Games will be January 27 - February 17. As a Florida Sports Foundation sanctioned event, the games provide 18 different Olympic-style competitions and activities for any person age 50 and older. These competitions take place at various locations throughout Lee County. The City encourages our seniors to consider participating in these games for your fitness, health and wellness. For information on the Senior Games, call 573-3125.

Hurricane Season Exits, Brush Fire Season Enters

Now that the hurricane season has ended, Cape Coral prepares for the dry season and the brush fires that accompany the dry weather.

This season could be more active than last year, which did not have many wildfire events. There is an abundance of dense growth and exotic vegetation, which becomes tinder for wildfires. As more people build near the remaining wooded areas, this can create a dangerous situation during dry season.

We encourage homeowners to take steps to protect their properties during the brush fire season. If you live in wooded and brushy areas, please maintain a good, clean perimeter of at least 30 to 40 feet around the home and adjacent structures. These perimeters will slow any approaching fire and allow better access to the Fire Department. Review the following questions to determine if your home is at risk for fire damage. For more information on brush fire season, contact the Fire Department at 574-0501.

- Does forest vegetation encroach too near to your home?
- Do tree limbs hang over the roof or chimney of your home?
- Is your roof clear of limbs and debris?
- Do your chimneys have spark arrestors?
- Do you store firewood and other combustibles near your home?
- Do you allow leaves and trash to accumulate?
- Do you have an outside source of water in case of fire?
- Do you keep tools handy such as shovels, rakes and a ladder?
- Do you have fire-resistant shingles?
- Do you have cypress mulch or pine straw landscaping adjacent to your home?
- Are you located in an area where most of the trees are pines?

Some additional threats for residents include:

- Highly flammable plants providing a pathway to the home
- Wooden fence attached to home under the eaves
- Grasses/shrubs not properly watered
- Boat too close to home or other structure
- Camper or trailer too close to structure
- Vehicles parked near structure
- Propane/gas tanks too near to the home

City Council Adopts Budget and Lowers Tax Rate

On September 21, the City Council adopted the 2005-2006 operating budget for Cape Coral which began October 1. For the seventh consecutive year, Council reduced the overall tax rate for Cape Coral property owners. If you have a homesteaded property, you will see a decrease in Cape Coral's General Fund and Debt Service portions of your property taxes.

Cape Coral property taxes are about 27 percent of your total property tax bill. School taxes are the greatest single portion of the tax bill. Services for Lee County government, the Library Fund, Mosquito Control as well as South Florida Water Management District also contribute to your total property tax bill.

The City Council approved a General Fund millage rate of 5.2787 and a Debt Service millage rate of 0.1119 for a total millage rate of 5.3906 mils. This equates to \$5.3906 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. This millage rate represents a decrease of 0.3692 mils or 6.4 percent.

If you have a homesteaded property, you should see a decrease in your Cape Coral property taxes. This table shows estimated tax decreases from last year to this year on various levels of taxable assessed value.

Homesteaded property provides two benefits to the homeowner. The first is a \$25,000 reduction on the assessed value of the home. This reduces the final amount upon which your taxes are calculated.

The second benefit is the "Save Our Homes" law, which limits the amount that a homesteaded property can increase in assessed value each year. With Save Our Homes (SOH), a homesteaded property's value can increase only by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or 3 percent, whichever is lower. For this year, the CPI was 3.3 percent so increases were limited to the 3 percent.

This means that regardless of market conditions, for property tax purposes, the value of homesteaded property can increase by only 3 percent. If a home has a taxable assessed value of \$150,000 and the value increases to \$180,000 the next year, the property is treated differently for tax purposes depending on whether Homestead and SOH are attached. See the table below:

	Homestead	Non-Homestead
Assessed Value 2005	\$150,000	\$150,000
Assessed Value 2006	\$154,500 (SOH limit of 3%)	\$180,000
Homestead Credit	(\$25,000)	N/A
Taxable Value 2006	\$129,500	\$180,000
Cape Coral taxes (5.3906)	\$698.06	\$970.31

Eagle Skatepark Set to Open

Eagle Skatepark will be opening its doors this winter to residents and may be open by the time this newsletter arrives. The 27,000-square-foot facility is located at 315 SW 2nd Avenue, adjacent to the existing Wm. "Bill" Austen Youth Center. The park is named for the owners of Eagle Realty, who provided most of the funding for the facility.

The skatepark will feature equipment by Woodward Designs and was designed by the nationally recognized skatepark design company HUNA. HUNA has connections to premiere XGames athletes such as skateboarder Tony Hawk and BMX rider Dave Mirra. The equipment is suitable for skateboarders and inline skaters of all ages and skill levels. The park will feature numerous obstacles that make up its street course. The course will have ramps, grind boxes, half and quarter pipes, grind rails and picnic tables to simulate street skating.

Annual membership to the facility is \$25 for residents ages 8 to 21. The annual fee includes membership to the Wm. "Bill" Austen Youth Center for those ages 8 to 18. Memberships also are available for residents and non-residents who are at least 6 years of age. The cost for these memberships vary.

The facility will give skateboarders somewhere safe and legal to practice their sport. The skatepark is a cooperative effort of the Youth Crime Intervention Program and the City of Cape Coral. The park will be managed by the City's Parks and Recreation Department.



Restoring the Power after the Storm

After two major hurricanes impacted Southwest Florida, the most common question to the City was, "When will my power be restored?"

The City of Cape Coral does not manage the electric utility in the city. The service is provided by LCEC. To better understand the LCEC restoration plan, residents need to know how electricity is delivered to the home or business. The main components of an electric system are the power plant, the transmission system and the distribution system.

Power plant

This is where electricity is generated and sent out over the delivery system.

Transmission system

This is a group of lines used to transmit energy at high voltage. There are two components to the system:

- *Transmission lines* carry electricity to substations, strategically located throughout the system.
- *Substation power transformers* are located at substations to reduce high transmission voltages to a lower distribution voltage. LCEC's distribution system is made up of 19 substations.

Distribution system

These are the distribution lines, transformers and other electrical devices, used to distribute electricity at a lower voltage. There are several components to this system:

- *Distribution transformers* are located on poles or pads (for underground service) throughout the system to reduce voltage even lower for use in homes and businesses.
- *Electric circuit* is a combination of distribution lines called *feeders and taps*, transformers and devices. Most areas within LCEC's service territory are served by more than one circuit. There are almost 100 distribution circuits.

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City Completes Fleet Certification Testing Program

Cape Coral's Fleet Management Division has successfully completed the Fleet Counselor Services, Inc. fleet certification testing program and has qualified as an "Industry Competitive Fleet Management Operation." Cape Coral finished with a score that placed it on the list of the best-managed fleets nationwide. Others on the list include, Lee County, FL, Greeley, CO, Fresno, CA, University of California at Davis, Las Vegas Water District, Fort Collins, CO, Salt Lake County, UT, and Tallahassee, FL. The program is underwritten by three nonprofit educational trade associations in North America.

Cape Coral's Fleet Management Department has implemented the following cost-effective programs during the past few years allowing the fleet to pass the testing:

- Preventive Maintenance Program
- Fuel Management Program
- Vehicle Replacement Program
- Fleet Utilization Program

The Cape Coral Fleet Management team started the testing process last January and completed implementation of the final requirements in August of 2005, resulting in a score of 170 points and 90 percent. Fleet operations must score at least 137 points or 76 percent to receive the certification, and must pass all eight Foundation Categories with a minimum of eight points required for each.

To maintain certification, Cape Coral will be required to pass the same testing process every other year as new performance standards are developed by FCS.

Hurricane Wilma Damages Thousands of Roadway Signs

While the City of Cape Coral had minimal damage from Hurricane Wilma, the City's roadway signage was not as fortunate. About 50 percent of the City's 30,000 roadway signs were damaged by the winds of Wilma.

The City has all of its sign crews working on repairing these signs, which includes stop signs and street identification signs. The Florida Department of Transportation also provided several crews to assist. These crews are working diligently to repair all City roadway signage as quickly as possible.

All stop signs at all-way stops and along major parkways and boulevards have been repaired. However, due to the vast number of signs, it may take as long as eight to nine months to repair the roadway signs in residential areas.

While the signage restoration is underway, the City asks that the public please use caution when driving on public streets.

Marine Concepts Expands Operations in Cape

Marine Concepts, a leading fiberglass tooling company, celebrated a major expansion in October when they cut the ribbon on an 8,000-square-foot expansion. The new building houses their new "million dollar baby," a five-axis milling machine at the leading edge of technology in their industry.

The president of Marine Concepts, Bob Long, thanked the City administration for its efforts to make the expansion possible. The facility, located at 2443 SW Pine Island Road, is in the Pine Island Corridor. The expansion represents an investment of \$1.5 million and the creation of as many as 20 new jobs. At least half of these jobs will be well-paying CAD and engineering positions. The City Council approved a business incentive for the company valued at \$22,000, which they will receive once the new jobs are created.

"This project demonstrates the City's commitment to grow our existing businesses, in addition to recruiting new ones," said Mike Jackson, the City's Economic Development Director.

Marine Concepts is one of the top five leading companies that makes plugs and molds for the recreational boating industry. The company is expanding into design and production of molds for household products, such as hot tubs. The company also is venturing into the defense industry and theme park rides and signage.

While most of its customers are in the United States, the company is studying expansion opportunities, particularly in emerging Eastern European nations. Marine Concept's competitive advantage is that it brings design, milling and mold production under one roof.

The new, computer-controlled milling machine can create prototypes as long as 60 feet. The equipment allows the company to reduce product development time by more than 50 percent.

City's Cable Service Transfers to Comcast

The City of Cape Coral will have a new cable service provider in 2006 once the sale of Adelphia Cable to Time Warner Cable and Comcast is approved by the Federal Communications Commission. The agreement to purchase the bankrupt cable provider will result in the transfer of service areas between Time Warner and Comcast. Cape Coral will become part of the Comcast service area in Lee County.

The City does not anticipate any disruption in services during and after the transfer.

City Issues Record Number of Home Permits in FY 2005

The City of Cape Coral set another record for single-family home permits in FY 2005, issuing 7,762 permits. In 2004, the City issued 5,511, which also had set a record. The total number of permit applications was 82,925 this year, compared to 58,209 in FY 2004 - an overall increase of 30 percent.

With a record amount of building in the Cape, the City's inspection team predictably was inundated with inspection requests. Inspectors completed 206,452 inspections during FY 2005, compared to 148,547 the previous fiscal year - an overall increase of 39 percent.

WildCam Update

The anticipated return of the City's wildcams was delayed due to some problems with the delivery of the camera equipment from the company in New York. The cameras finally arrived, and the new equipment should be operational by the printing of this newsletter.

The City will have the OwlCam and OspreyCam online first, along with a second EagleCam site. The original EagleCam site, George and Gracie's nest, will be back in view by early 2006. Visit the City's website to access the cameras: www.capegov.org.

Festival of the Arts Show Scheduled for January 14-15

The 2006 Realmark Cape Coral Festival of the Arts will be held on Cape Coral Parkway in downtown Cape Coral between Del Prado Blvd and Vincennes on January 14 - 15. Hours of the show will be 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. With more than 280 quality exhibitors, the Cape Coral show has been rated as one of the best arts festivals in the nation. This will be the 21st year for the show.

The Arts Festival began in 1983 when the Rotary Club of Cape Coral was looking for a new project that would benefit the community and serve as a fundraiser for other projects. Club member John Jacobsen suggested a juried art festival.

The Rotary Club thought this would be an opportunity to bring a cultural event to a community that had little to offer in the way of the arts. The first event was held the second weekend in January, which would place the show at the beginning of the winter season on the arts festival circuit. Jaycee Park at the end of Beach Parkway was the original location.

The art festival committee solicited applications from artists and craftspeople from all over the country in categories of painting, photography, sculpture, mixed media, jewelry and crafts. About 180 artists submitted four slides of their work, and a jury of experts and lay people combed through the slides and selected the best 120. Preparations for the first show continued for 18 months. The work paid off - the first show was a success.

That was 20 years ago. The arts festival has grown into a major two-day event. The festival moved to Cape Coral Parkway in downtown Cape Coral in 2000. The show is sponsored by Realmark and hosts about 100,000 visitors. Proceeds from the event are distributed to a number of Rotary-sponsored charities locally and internationally.

For more information on the Realmark Cape Coral Festival of the Arts, call 945-1988.

Projects Coming to the Cape

The City's Planning Division and other City staff reviewers are currently processing 27 Planned Development Project (PDP) applications. Brief descriptions of four of these PDP applications follow:

BURNT STORE PRESERVE

An application is under review for this 47-acre parcel located on Burnt Store Road, south of the Charlotte County line. The proposed plan provides for 41 single-family residential units, 144 multi-family units and 140 mid-rise apartments. This site is proposed to be developed in phases: Phase I is proposed to consist of the five, mid-rise buildings including all infrastructure, utility services and the surface water management system. Phase II is proposed to include the 144 multi-family units, and Phase III is proposed to include the 41 single-family units.

CORAL WALK

City staff is reviewing a PDP application from NAP Pondella, LLC to facilitate the development of a 36-acre site located at the southeastern corner of Pine Island Road and Pondella Road. The applicant is requesting subdivision approval of the site, which is proposed to contain a shopping center consisting of two tracts totaling 21.77 acres, one 3.14-acre lake tract, two stormwater detention tracts totaling 2.17 acres, and five outparcels ranging in size from 0.91 acres to 2.19 acres.

PINE ISLAND ROAD MEDICAL OFFICE BUILDING

In September, City staff received a PDP application from Lee Healthcare Resources, Inc. for a project called Pine Island Road Medical Office Building. This 2.26-acre site consists of three parcels located near the southwest corner of Pondella Road and Pine Island Road. The applicant is proposing to develop a 26,000-square-foot medical office building.

CAPE CORAL CHARTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NORTH

Also under review at this time is an application from the City, requesting approval of a 600-student Charter Elementary School on a portion of Block 3934. The 8.49-acre site is located at the intersection of SW 29th Avenue and SW 3rd Street, east of Burnt Store Road, south of Embers Parkway and north of Ceitus Parkway.

How to Maintain a Healthy Lawn

Efficient lawn irrigation starts with watering only when your turf begins to show signs of stress, such as:

- Bluish gray areas in your lawn
- Footprints that stay in your grass long after being made
- Many blades of your grass folded in half lengthwise

As a rule, your turf's average annual irrigation needs are about 1 inch of water a week. During extremely dry periods, which occur during April and May, your grass might need about 1.5 inches.

Make sure to soak the soil when you water. Usually one-half to three-quarters of an inch of water per application is sufficient. This will encourage deeper root systems that are more tolerant of drought conditions. Too much watering can cause disease in your yard. Watering too frequently, and too lightly, encourages shallow root systems that are less tolerant of drought.

You can measure the amount of water being applied by placing several empty containers within the sprinkler's spray pattern. Keep track of the time it takes for the average depth in the containers to reach one-half or three-quarters of an inch. This will then become the guideline for the irrigation time your grass needs. (Try this calibration again every once in a while to make sure that you are still applying the correct amount of water.) Remember that your turf's average annual irrigation requirements are generally about one inch of water a week.

CRA Conducts Traffic Study

The redevelopment plan for the CRA (Community Redevelopment Agency) Downtown District envisions a compact, walkable, mixed-use environment where people of all ages can live, work, shop and be entertained. The adopted Master Plan for the area and new corresponding proposed land development codes have employed “Smart Growth” methods and “New Urbanism” principles into the vision and zoning for Downtown Cape Coral. The challenge for the district is to make the area more pedestrian friendly while handling the volume of cross-town traffic, particularly on the two main corridors of Cape Coral Parkway and Del Prado. The Cape Coral Downtown CRA Traffic Study is the first step in this plan.

The goal of this study is to find a balance between creating a pedestrian-friendly area and meeting the high traffic demands of Cape Coral Parkway and Del Prado Boulevard. Alternatives developed will be implemented within the next 5- to 20-year timeframe.

Study Details

The traffic study will examine the traffic patterns, circulation, land uses and related issues in the study area and develop various alternatives that would:

- Enhance the safety and mobility of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and motorists
- Enhance traffic circulation and flow in the area to reduce overall vehicle delays, stops, and emissions
- Enable positive economic growth and development

- Complement current and future plans related to city-wide and regional movement of people, goods and services

Extensive groundwork has been completed with the "Design Downtown Community Redevelopment Area Master Plan." The Downtown Cape Coral community developed “First Principles” to redevelop the downtown area, three of which are specifically related to this traffic study. They are Walkability, Taming Through Traffic and Smart Parking. The Master Plan also included 10 criteria for “walkability,” and five of these criteria will be addressed in the traffic study.

- Flow of traffic
- Circulation of traffic
- Access points
- Parking plan
- Pedestrian facilities



New Electronic Document Imaging System in Place

The City Clerk's Office is installing a new document imaging system. The new system, called SIRE (Scan, Index, Retrieve and Edit), is a product designed by AlphaCorp, a company from Salt Lake City. SIRE is being used by other government agencies including the Florida Attorney General's Office and the cities of Phoenix and Irvine, CA.

Having an efficient scanning process in place is essential to manage the enormous volume of documents generated by the City. New building permits alone generate more than half-a-million pieces of paper per year. It is not physically possible, nor cost efficient, to store these records in boxes stacked in buildings. With the current process of storing records in boxes, a records request could take a day or two because the documents must be retrieved from the off-site storage facility.

Scanned records can be searched easily and printed or emailed to people who need information. Electronic records also are better protected from extreme weather conditions.

Staff has been training and testing the system, and converting documents from existing software. SIRE is the first phase of the City's efforts to streamline the record-keeping process. Other software enhancements will allow the City to increase the availability of documents online and improve the agenda process. The City plans to implement these other phases within the next six months.



Construction Continues on New Fire Stations

The Fire Department is completing construction on three fire stations. Work should be completed on Fire Stations 3, 4 and 8 by spring 2006. While Hurricane Wilma caused some minor setbacks during construction, the contractor remains on schedule for completion. Lodge Construction is the contractor for the fire station projects.

Fire Station #8 will be located at the intersection of Nicholas Parkway and Embers Parkway. The station should be completed in April and will house a Special Operations Engine Company. The facility will include a dedicated space for a neighborhood police substation. A temporary Station #8 opened this summer at 1509 NW 21st Street near Chiquita Boulevard to provide services in the interim.

Fire Station #3 is relocating from its current location on Everest Parkway to another site on the same street, slightly closer to Del Prado Boulevard. The station should be built by June.

Fire Station #4 is moving about five blocks north of its current location on Santa Barbara and Veterans Parkway to the 2100 block of Santa Barbara.

This major multi-year program to improve and expand our emergency response capabilities has three primary objectives:

- **Fast Response** - The new stations will be built to meet the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard requirement to arrive on-scene to emergencies within less than five minutes after the call is placed in at least 90 percent of the cases.

- **Survivability** - All new fire stations will be built to withstand moderate Hurricane Category 5 winds (172 mph) at higher elevations so they can be staffed during a hurricane. These new structures will provide a safe environment for Fire personnel who will be active in the recovery phase of a major storm incident. Our ability to respond immediately to emergency calls for assistance and property damage assessments after the winds subside will be greatly enhanced. For flood elevation purposes, all of the new fire stations will be noticeably higher than previous buildings.

- **Cost Reduction** - The master plan for future fire stations was re-evaluated, and the City determined that the total stations needed at buildout would be 18 rather than 19. This reduction lowers the annual operating costs by about \$1 million.



Power after the Storm

Continued from Page 8

- **Feeders** carry reduced voltages from substations to the poles outside homes and businesses.

- **Tap lines** carry electricity from feeders to a transformer. Taps are typically located in neighborhoods or business districts.

- **Service drops** carry electricity from the transformer to the customers' home or business.

- **Fuse** is a protective device located at the connection of the tap and the feeder, similar to the fuses and circuit breakers in your car or home. They protect wire and equipment from damage caused by short circuits and overload. When one of these events occurs, the fuse "opens" and de-energizes the line. Just like your car or home fuse, the cause of the event must be resolved and a new fuse installed to restore power.

How do these systems impact LCEC's restoration efforts?

LCEC's plan first calls for restoration of essential services such as hospitals, traffic signals, water production plants, shelters, communication centers and law enforcement. Next, power is restored to the largest number of customers. This is achieved by first restoring transmission lines, then substations and then feeders.

Once feeders are restored, taps that lead to neighborhoods and businesses can be restored. These taps can be either very large, encompassing hundreds of customers, or very small, serving only one customer. The larger taps are restored before smaller taps. Individual services or services that need to be reconnected after repair to the customer's damaged electrical system are restored last. At this stage, transformer change-outs also are made.

Main feeders must be energized before homes or businesses along that route can receive power. Therefore, you may not see crews in your neighborhood immediately after a storm because they are working on rebuilding or restoring power to these main lines.

LCEC's staff and crews work round-the-clock to restore electricity following a major storm. While the majority of customers usually have power restored within a day, there will be isolated pockets of homes that take longer. LCEC encourages customers to be prepared for the possibility of a loss of power, and also be patient as the crews work to restore service. For more information, please visit the LCEC website at www.lcec.net.

City Provides Assistance to a Devastated Mississippi City

Pass Christian nearly destroyed by Hurricane Katrina

As Hurricane Katrina roared through Louisiana and Mississippi communities, the storm left devastation in its tracks. Heeding a call for help from these communities, the City sent two staff members from Public Works to the area to provide assistance.

On October 5, Public Works Director Chuck Pavlos and Project Manager Mark Ridenour left for the Gulf Coast areas hard hit by Hurricane Katrina. They stayed in the town of Long Beach, MS, for six days and helped provide damage assessment and cost estimates to repair water and sewer lines damaged by storm surge that exceeded 30 feet. These cost estimates were submitted to FEMA for reimbursement for the much-needed repairs.

Pavlos and Ridenour also made a number of trips to the small town of Pass Christian, MS, possibly the hardest hit area during

the hurricane. Pass Christian had 100 percent of their businesses destroyed, and 80 percent to 90 percent of all residential homes were not habitable. They met with city leaders to assess their needs and help plan for future missions to the area.

“For those who discount the impact of storm surge, they should take a look at Pass Christian and see what 35 feet of storm surge can do to a community,” said Pavlos. “I have never seen destruction of such magnitude as what this town experienced from Katrina. Nearly every structure was leveled by the storm surge, and there was very little left standing.”

Cape Coral helped coordinate with a number of other municipalities in Florida to send additional crews and equipment to help in the restoration of many services. Crews helped restore water and sewer services, repair street signs, conduct structural inspections, and assist in

preparing all of the necessary financial documentation required by FEMA. As of December 1, the City had sent one plans examiner from DCD, two utilities service crews from the Public Works Collection and Distribution, and one GIS Analyst from the Information Technologies Services Department. The City employees who traveled to the area were Jim Litterello, Dan Cobb, John Metcalf, Anthony Robilotta, Chris Severa, Ismael Jose Salinas and David Van Gelder.

Even though it will take years to rebuild these communities, the assistance that the City was able to provide was much appreciated and helped rebuild the confidence and hope that those people so desperately needed. Many thanks to the City employees who volunteered to travel to Mississippi on these missions.



A resident sorts through debris for any salvageable items that once were part of her home.



A homeowner walks where her home once stood and tries to comprehend the mass destruction in her neighborhood.

Photos courtesy of Jim Litterello

Santa Barbara Boulevard Road Widening Status Update

The design for the Santa Barbara Boulevard widening project is approaching completion, and construction is anticipated to begin in the first half of 2006. The City's construction manager, Centex Construction, is working with the City to fast-track several major road projects such as Santa Barbara Boulevard. This project will provide six lanes on Santa Barbara Boulevard from Gleason Parkway to State Road 78 (Pine Island Road). The project also will provide four lanes on Hancock Bridge Parkway from Santa Barbara Boulevard to State Road 78.

The Santa Barbara Boulevard Widening Project has been divided into three phases:

- Phase I - Widen the Cadman Canal Bridge (this is the bridge near SunSplash)
- Phase II - Widen Santa Barbara Boulevard between SE 8th Street and Pine Island Road, including the Hancock Bridge Parkway Extension (west of Santa Barbara Boulevard)
- Phase III - Widen Santa Barbara Boulevard between Gleason Parkway and SE 8th Street

The design for Phase I is complete, and once the necessary permits are approved, construction will begin on the Cadman Canal Bridge. This work is anticipated to be completed by Fall 2006. As Phase I winds down, Phase II will commence. LCEC recently relocated their transmission poles as part of an upgrading project, and the new pole locations have been incorporated into the road design for Phase II.

Design for Phase III is underway, and should be completed by the end of 2006. The construction of this phase will begin after the existing transmission poles are relocated out of the medians. As opposed to Phase II where the poles are able to remain in the medians, the required pole spacing and proposed turn lane requirements for Phase III make this option unfeasible.

Scheduling work with the least amount of impact to the motoring public has been of paramount importance and continues to be a basic requirement. Equally important will be efforts to inform the public both directly and indirectly affected by this project. Newsletters, websites, street signage and personal visits to residences and businesses will be the most visible means of this communication.

Construction management has been a successful way to complete City road projects on time and within budget by partnering with the designers, the public and the City staff. This delivery method also allows for earlier interaction between the construction team and the design team, and combines each one's experience and know-how into the final set of plans. As a result, major changes to the plans over the course of the project are minimized.

For inquiries and more information about this project, please go to the City of Cape Coral website at www.capegov.org, and click on the Citizen's Action Center link or you may contact the Centex Public Information Officer, Brenda Menendez at (239) 707-9050.

Active 2005 Hurricane Season Finally Over

"The 2005 Atlantic basin hurricane season was the most active and destructive season on record."

Dr. William Gray, Colorado State University

The 2005 Atlantic hurricane season shattered many long-standing records, tops among them a record number of named storms. There were so many storms that the National Hurricane Center had to resort to using the Greek alphabet for the last five storms.

The 2005 season produced 13 hurricanes, surpassing the old record of 12 set in 1969. With three Category 5 hurricanes, Katrina, Rita and Wilma, this season also claimed the most Cat. 5 storms. These three storms left death and destruction in their paths.

Wilma became the strongest hurricane on record in the Atlantic Basin with a pressure of 882 mb, breaking the old record held by Gilbert set in 1988 with a pressure of 888 mb. The landfall of four major hurricanes on the United States

also was a record. The final tally for damage will reflect that this season was the most costly hurricane season in U.S. history, surpassing the \$45 billion in damaged created in 2004.

Cape Coral experienced several close calls this year, and then had a late visit from Wilma. While the damage was not as severe as Charley in 2004, these storms should continue to be a strong reminder to residents not to let their guard down or become complacent. Whether it is strong winds, rainfall, freshwater flooding or storm surge, Cape Coral is susceptible to all of these effects.

For more information on hurricane preparedness, contact the Cape Coral Emergency Operations Center at 573-3022.

New Parks Slated for Cape Coral

The Parks and Recreation Department is continuing to address elements of the Parks Master Plan, which indicated deficiencies in the area of parks for Cape Coral. During the next few years, the City will be developing several new park properties for the community. All of these parks are being funded in part by grant funds provided by the Department of Environmental Protection.

Neighborhood Park #1 (Southeast Cape Coral)

This park is located east of Del Prado and south of Hancock Bridge Parkway. Amenities of this park may include playgrounds, picnic shelters, basketball courts and walking path. The elements of this park were devised by the City of Cape Coral and the neighbors at a neighborhood meeting. Potential completion of this park is summer 2007.

Sirenia Vista Park (Southwest Cape Coral)

This environmental park is located off Ceitus Parkway and west of Burnt Store Road. This passive park will feature a manatee observation area, picnic facilities, kayak and canoe launch, educational signage and interpretative viewing areas. This will be the City's third environmental park. This park will be planned with input from the surrounding neighbors. Projected opening of this park is 2007.

Neighborhood Park #4 (Northwest Cape Coral)

This neighborhood park is west of Burnt Store Road and north of Pine Island Road near the Sirenia Vista Park location. This site is seven acres of vacant property in a rapidly developing residential neighborhood. Surrounding neighbors have expressed their support and provided input for the future park. This will be the only neighborhood park north of Pine Island Road. Development of this park is due to be completed by summer 2007.

Neighborhood Park #5 (Southwest Cape Coral)

This future park is located next to the site of the Cape Coral Charter School North on SW 29th Ave and SW 3rd Lane. This park will host athletic facilities, such as softball, baseball and soccer fields. The neighborhood aspect of this park will consist of playgrounds and picnic shelters. The projected completion date for this project is summer 2006.

The Parks and Recreation Department is very excited about the recreational opportunities being brought to our community via our new neighborhood and specialty parks. If you have any questions about our parks or employment opportunities within the Parks and Recreation Department please call (239) 573-3128.

Hurricane Wilma Causes \$9.5 Million in Damages

On October 24, the city was impacted by a major hurricane for the second time in as many years. Hurricane Wilma slipped across Southwest Florida, bringing more destruction to our neighbors on the other coast than to the point of landfall near Cape Romano. However, Wilma's backside brought significant winds and damage to Cape Coral. Some wind gusts hit 85 mph, with most of the winds measured between 40 mph and 60 mph.

After the storm passed, City crews were out assessing the damage and clearing the streets. The City estimates that damage to homes and businesses was about \$9.5 million. City facilities sustained another \$500,000 in damage. When compared to the \$500 million of damage caused by Hurricane Charley last year, Hurricane Wilma was kind to our city.

Building inspectors found more than 500 structures that sustained damage, with most of the damage considered minor. There were 20 structures with major damage, and one house trailer was destroyed by the storm.

Reports on City parks included damaged lights at the ball fields, uprooted trees, twisted signs and scoreboards, missing shingles, and miscellaneous debris. The damage closed many parks, and some did not reopen for more than two weeks. The City was able to minimize damage prior to the arrival of the storm by lowering the new, ball field lights at Pelican Baseball and Jason Verdow Park.

Unfortunately, Wilma damaged the sports lighting at BMX Sports Complex, Pelican Soccer Complex, Cape Coral Sports Complex, Burton Park and the Caloosa Football Complex. The City prioritized the repair work, and the facilities that hosted the youth football and soccer leagues were the first priorities. The soccer organization had to be relocated temporarily due to the damage at the soccer complexes. The BMX Softball Complex and Burton Park were without lights for an extended period of time because of significant damages. The City is working on a proposal to switch these properties to the new lighting systems that were installed at Verdow and Pelican Baseball.

Another priority was the annual Kids Fest, scheduled for October 29 at Jaycee Park. Jaycee had taken a major hit from Wilma; however, crews from the Facilities Division in Public Works and Parks worked together to clean up the park and have the grounds ready for this special event. Kids Fest went on as scheduled and was well attended with more than 3,000 people at the park.