City Council Approves Construction Firm to Serve as Consultant for Utilities Extension Project

At a July meeting, the City Council approved a resolution giving authority to City staff to begin negotiating a contract with Tetra Tech, the top-ranked firm to consult and oversee the utilities extension project. City Council approved moving ahead with the extension of water, sewer and irrigation lines in SW 6/7, North 1 and North 2 areas. These areas also will receive new roads with the project.

Tetra Tech is one of the top design/engineering firms in the country and will work with the City on the SW 6/7 project. The City team and Tetra Tech reps will develop a fee structure that provides for a review of existing engineering designs for the SW 6/7 area, which were completed in 2008 by the prior design firm. Tetra Tech also will assist with construction management and

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On The Move is a quarterly newsletter produced by the City of Cape Coral for the citizens of the city. The publication is mailed as a courtesy to every household and business in the city. Comments or questions can be directed to the City Manager’s Office, P.O. Box 150027, Cape Coral, FL 33915-0027 or by email to newsletter@capecoral.net.
I wanted to share some exciting news with you. On July 28, I had the pleasure of attending the Army Reserve Center groundbreaking ceremony held on their future site at Diplomat Parkway and Corbett Road.

With this facility, the City of Cape Coral will be home to the 81st Regional Support Command, the 451st Quartermaster Company and the 365th Engineering Company. This $13.5 million project includes the construction of a Reserve Training Facility (37,500 square feet), a Vehicle Maintenance Shop (7,650 square feet), and a Storage Facility (1,500 square feet).

It is expected that 325 active, full-time guards and up to 12 civilians will be assigned to the base. The annual budget is estimated at $6.7 million. This will be spent on leases, utilities maintenance, municipal services and environmental. The annual payroll is estimated at more than $1 million. The grounds will be used to conduct reserve officer training needed to prepare the soldiers for mission deployment.

The Army Reserve plays a vital role in our national defense. At this time, the reserve segment of our military or “Total Force” is larger than the full-time component of our military. The Total Force relies on the Army Reserve Soldiers and units being ready to respond to global and domestic requirements. Army Reserve units allow the Total Force to meet and sustain global and domestic requirements.

Army Reserve soldiers, families and employers are a vital part of their communities. As time goes on, this will become more apparent in Cape Coral. One must keep in mind that the reserve soldiers also are working men and women. They hold full-time jobs in the civilian sector while also being soldiers. They have husbands, wives and children and still are able to maintain their status as citizen soldiers, and we owe them a debt of gratitude that is impossible to pay.

When they become activated for duty, they must leave their civilian lives to serve our country. Our democracy depends on the willingness of its finest men and women to step forward and to serve, to dedicate themselves to a greater cause – the cause of protecting our democracy.

We, as civilians, can help them when they return and must be integrated back into civilian society. We must also ensure that their families are safe and cared for when they are away from home. Cape Coral for example, has one of the lowest crime rates in the state of Florida. This is due to one of the best police departments in Florida. Citizen soldiers can rest assured that their families are safe in our community during their absence.

This is a wonderful and welcome addition to our city, and I am thankful the City of Cape Coral was selected for the Army Reserve Center.

Thank you for your time.

Best regards,
**Utilities Extension Project** ………………. from page 1

inspection services related to this project area. A contract will be brought to City Council for approval in September.

The City is using a different process for SW 6/7 from the previous “program manager at risk.” The City will provide the oversight of the UEP project with a Utilities Extension Manager who works within the City Manager’s Office. Tetra Tech will provide significant assistance with the overall project and work with the City’s UEP team.

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**35 City Facilities Surpass Electricity Usage Reduction Goals**

The City of Cape Coral continues to make significant progress toward its energy reduction goals with 35 facilities meeting or exceeding the 2012 electricity reduction goal of 10 percent. Seven facilities already have surpassed the 2017 goal of 25 percent while five have surpassed the 2025 reduction goal of 40 percent. The combined electricity savings is equivalent to the annual power usage of 160 typical homes in Cape Coral or 1,311 tons of coal as power plant fuel.

Reductions at 33 of the facilities were achieved simply by implementing better energy management and maintenance and no project funding. For example, the savings at the Police Headquarters was achieved by tuning the air conditioning controls for the most-efficient operation, eliminating unneeded outside air, and adjusting to higher air conditioning temperatures during unoccupied times. These improvements are forecast to result in an annual energy use reduction of 983 MWh, or the equivalent annual electricity use of 48 typical Cape Coral homes.

The City’s Energy Team has implemented 27 projects at a cost of $558,000, which will result in annual savings approaching $600,000 for a simple payback of 0.9 years.

Congratulations to our City employees and users of these facilities for this remarkable progress.

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**Electricity Use Reduction for the 12 Months Ending in July 2012 vs. 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Name</th>
<th>Reduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eagle Skate Park</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strausser BMX Softball Complex</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yacht Club Pool Bath House</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason Verdow Memorial Park</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yacht Club Fishing Pier</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koza/Saladino Park</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William “Bill” Austen Youth Center</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SunSplash Electric Slide &amp; Tot Spot</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCFD Emergency Operations Center</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Coral Art Studio</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Coral City Hall</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotino Senior Center</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Coral Yacht Basin</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Complex - Softball</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works Maintenance Offices</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Complex - Soccer</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storm Football Complex</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Headquarters (vs. 2010 first year of use)</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Complex - Baseball</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SunSplash Restaurant</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Freedom Park</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Station 6</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SunSplash Filter System</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelican Baseball Complex</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Jeffers Park</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Complex - Maintenance</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW Softball Irrigation</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Stonis Park</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Station 3</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Populations</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cape Coral PKWY Memorial Median Fountain</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Station 5</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Coral Art Studio Annex</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burton Park - Sports Lights</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Station 2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The City of Cape Coral has one of the most advanced irrigation systems in the country, and our residents are fortunate to have this resource available for use. The City’s dual-water system is the envy of many municipalities, and Cape Coral has received accolades for its proactive approach to managing our available water resources.

At a recent City Council meeting, several comments from the public reflected a lack of understanding on how the dual-water system operates. This Q&A article will help explain how the dual-water system works and why we have a watering schedule in place especially during the dry season.

**How does the dual-water system work?**

The City uses a two-pipe solution. The City’s water plants pull groundwater from deep wells and treat the water through the reverse osmosis process. The plants pump this water to your home for potable uses (drinking, cooking, cleaning, flushing, etc.). The wastewater (raw sewage) you then produce is sent back to a Water Reclamation Facility (Everest or Southwest plants). This wastewater is then treated to state-mandated reuse quality levels and pumped into five separate reuse storage tanks capable of storing 25 million gallons. When you turn on your sprinklers to water your lawn, the irrigation water in the tanks is pumped out by multiple high pressure pumps at each facility through a second reclaimed distribution pipe (purple pipe) to your sprinklers or reuse spigot.

**Do we produce enough wastewater to irrigate all the lawns?**

No. Customers cannot produce enough raw sewage to meet the high demand for irrigation water. Our reclamation plants receive and treat about 12 million to 16 million gallons per day of raw sewage. By comparison, customers on the dual-water system can use more than 35 million gallons on any given watering day during the dry season.

**Then where does the City get the additional water for irrigation?**

The City is permitted to pump water from the freshwater canal system to supplement the reclaimed water. These freshwater canals are located in a wide area of the city north and south of Pine Island Road. During high demand in the dry season, as much as two-thirds of the water being used for watering lawns comes from these freshwater canals. This supplemental water is pumped by five canal pumping stations located in various parts of the city south of Pine Island Road. Water north of Pine Island is transferred south via a transfer pumping system.

**What are the benefits of the dual-water system?**

- We conserve our valuable drinking water supply. Overall drinking water consumption is reduced by at least 50 percent by using reclaimed water in lieu of drinking water for irrigation. This extends the number of years that the underground aquifers can be used by the City for drinking water purposes.
- Reclaimed wastewater is used for irrigation rather than being discharged into the Caloosahatchee River or to a Deep Injection Well.
- Customers pay only $9.50 per month for irrigation water. If customers had to use their potable water for irrigation, they would have extremely high water and sewer bills during the dry season. This is because the sewer portion of the monthly bill is calculated based on water consumption. Compare our monthly irrigation cost to that of a customer on Charlotte County utilities who pays $87 a month for the average of 10,000 gallons of irrigation water. In fact, customers in eight of the 11 local utilities will pay more than $42 per month for water to use for irrigating.

**Why do we pay $9.50 each month? I heard it was supposed to be $5 a month forever.**

The water, wastewater and irrigation systems are to be self-supporting. The $9.50 per month pays most of the cost for providing the irrigation service; however, the cost currently is subsidized through wastewater charges. In 1988, when the irrigation system was being discussed at City Council meetings, a monthly fee of $6 - $9 per month was stated as a potential cost.

**Why does the City have a watering schedule?**

There is not enough water in the freshwater canals and the reclamation tanks to allow unlimited watering for customers. Use of the water from the freshwater canals is permitted through the South Florida Water Management District. The City is allowed to draw down the canals but only to a certain level. Once the canals reach that level, we can no longer pump water from the freshwater system. Having a watering schedule is necessary to manage the resource responsibly and maintain adequate pressure to meet all irrigation needs during dry season. This includes ensuring that fire hydrants on the irrigation system will function properly in case of a fire emergency.

Lawns do not require as much water during the dry season to survive. Watering twice a week for a maximum of four hours each day is sufficient to maintain a lawn during the dry season.

**Why was the City considering reducing watering to one day a week?**

The one-day watering schedule is an “emergency” option in the City’s watering ordinance, which only would be implemented in case of a serious drought. The dry season can be very challenging from a water supply

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Dual Water System ............................. from page 5

standpoint, and we need our citizens to understand that if we do enact the “emergency” option, then we are at critically low levels in the freshwater canal systems.

- Why can’t the City just produce more irrigation water instead of limiting our watering during the dry season?

Water for our irrigation system is not infinite. One limitation of the system is that the City only can produce reclaimed water based on the amount of raw sewage received from customers on the system. We cannot manufacture more raw sewage.

The biggest limitation to the system is the weather. The main water source for our irrigation supply in the dry season is the freshwater canal system. While the canals hold a significant amount of water, these canals cannot replenish themselves during the dry season. If there is no rainfall during the dry months or the rainy season starts late, canal levels will drop significantly. The City has no control over Mother Nature, and when this scenario happens, we only can control the watering schedule.

- Why not use potable for irrigation?

There is not enough potable water to serve both purposes – drinking and irrigating. The City’s two reverse osmosis water plants, Southwest and North Cape, are permitted to produce a maximum each day of 18 million gallons and 12 million gallons respectively. Maxed out, our water plants only could produce 30 million gallons a day. (FYI – We would never be allowed by environmental agencies to run the plants at maximum capacity every day.)

As mentioned above, our residents can use more than 35 million gallons of irrigation water a day. When you do the math, you can see the City’s water plants cannot provide potable water and also meet the irrigation needs of our community. Much tighter watering restrictions would need to be in place to significantly limit the use for irrigation. Not to mention how wasteful it would be to use this highly treated water to keep grass green. It also would be very expensive for the customers who must pay for the added water use and increased sewer charges, which are based on water consumption. This question best illustrates the wise decision made by past City leaders and citizens when they chose to create a dual-water system.

- Why not use water from the Caloosahatchee River for irrigation?

The Caloosahatchee River is considered a Class III Marine water, which means it is not a freshwater supply. The water from the river in the surrounding area is saltwater or “brackish” water depending on the time of year. This water would kill grass and landscaping. Note: While the Caloosahatchee’s water east of the Franklin Locks is freshwater, the water is too far inland for Cape Coral to use.

- Why did the City promise that there would never be any restrictions on the irrigation usage?

There is no record that such a promise was made. As this article explains, it is not possible to supply unlimited irrigation water. The two sources used for irrigation – treated wastewater and water from the freshwater canals – are not unlimited.

- What happens to the reclaimed water during the summer?

The irrigation demand decreases during the summer months but consumers continue to use the irrigation water. The difference is that the amount of water pumped from the canals drops considerably.

- Why don’t we store more water during the rainy season to use in the dry season?

The City has made several improvements to retain more water during the rainy season. A plan to build aquifer storage recovery (ASR) wells, which would store rainwater for use during the dry season, was shelved due to a lack of funding. The City is pursuing other options that include taking the reclaimed water that is not being used by other municipalities such as the City of Fort Myers.

As Dry Season Arrives, Residents Reminded of Watering Schedule

All Cape residents have two days to water lawns

A two-day irrigation schedule is in place year-round for watering lawns in Cape Coral. Residents who use wells or the dual-water system have a specific four-hour timeframe on their designated days for watering. The watering days depend on the last number of the home address.

Here is the two-day schedule that is in effect for all of Cape Coral:

- Monday & Friday: Midnight to 4 a.m. for addresses ending in 0
- Monday & Friday: 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. for addresses ending in 1
- Wednesday & Saturday: Midnight to 4 a.m. for addresses ending in 3 and 5
- Wednesday & Saturday: 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. for addresses ending in 7 and 9
- Thursday & Sunday: Midnight to 4 a.m. for addresses ending in 2 and 4
- Thursday & Sunday: 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. for addresses ending in 6 and 8

Non-residential, duplexes and other multi-family units can water on Monday and Friday from midnight to 8 a.m.

Adjust Sprinkler Timers for Time Change on November 4

Residents are reminded to check the timers for their sprinklers and adjust accordingly for the time change associated with Daylight Savings Time. On November 4, the clocks “fall back” one hour. While the City provides a grace period to allow residents a little time to remember to adjust the timers and avoid a citation, that grace period does expire after 30 days.

If you have neighbors who are “snowbirds” and just returning from for the winter, please remind them to change their timers.
FY2011 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report Shows Compliance

Earlier this year, City staff presented the FY2011 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report to City Council. A “Comprehensive Annual Financial Report,” or CAFR, is the financial report of a state, municipal or other governmental entity that complies with the accounting pronouncements (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles - GAAP) promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

A CAFR is compiled by City staff and audited by an external certified accounting firm using the GASB pronouncements. The City’s CAFR includes the “unqualified” opinion that the City’s financial statements are fairly presented in conformity with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). This means the City’s external auditors, CliftonLarsonAllen, determined the books are clean and contain no material issues involving internal controls or financial reporting. The auditors did note several deficiencies, which is not unusual, and they made recommendations for grants management and reporting. In general, the City is in compliance with Government Auditing Standards.

The City continues to harbor a strong General Fund “fund balance” of $34 million or 31 percent of total expenditures. This is typically the most critical indicator of fiscal health as the City has about 3.5 months of operating funds in case of an emergency and to ensure available operating cash.

The General Fund, which funds most general operations of government, saw increased revenues from sales and use taxes, franchise fees, and communications services taxes. This helped to balance out decreases in property tax, and fine and forfeiture revenues, for a total increase in revenues over budget of $1.3 million. Expenditures decreased in the General Fund compared to budget by $2.9 million. The City accomplished this by reducing operating costs, and eliminating, or postponing filling, vacant positions.

City-wide assets, including all governmental and enterprise funds, decreased $20.6 million. This was due mainly to using fund balance in the governmental funds to significantly complete major capital projects such as Del Prado and Santa Barbara boulevards. This was partially offset by increased net assets in business-type or enterprise funds due to changes in inventory procedures and deferral of capital projects.

Several issues identified in prior audits were closed out in this report including the establishment of an investment policy adopted by City Council on August 8, 2011, regular reconciliations of utility billing revenues and outstanding allowances, and updating the utility billing software and collection procedures. Additionally, the City is in the process of entering all capital assets into its computer system and automating actual depreciation calculations. Stricter monitoring of grant funds has been implemented along with more stringent closing procedures to ensure greater accuracy and timeliness in financial and grant reporting.

Kudos to the Financial Services Department for another great audit.

What is the Difference between a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and Operating Budget?

Citizens may wonder why the City produces a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and an annual Operating Budget. They also may wonder why there are such disparate differences between numbers in the CAFR when compared to the Operating Budget. Very simply, the CAFR and the Operating Budget are two, distinctly different ways of looking at the City’s finances.

The budget is a statement of the proposed expenditures over the course of the coming year, and a statement of which income sources will be used to cover those expenditures. The budget is a cash-based description of activities in the coming year. Expenditures are recorded in the budget for when the obligation is incurred; however, this does not apply to long-term debt because only the current year principal and interest due is recorded in the budget not the total amount due on the debt.

While the budget is primarily a forward-looking, cash-based view of a single year of operations, the CAFR is quite different. The CAFR is a backward-looking comprehensive review of what happened in the last year, and it includes a number of items that are not referred to in the more cash-based budget. While the budget looks at activities in the short term, the CAFR looks at activities over the long term.

Simply put, there is a lot more in the CAFR than there is in the budget. The CAFR includes, among other things, future liabilities, some of which are not precisely known. The CAFR contains not only actual operating results from the year in question, it contains a number of additional future items that are, in some cases, moving targets.

Why is it important to know the difference between the budget and the CAFR? Because the CAFR uses very similar terminology to the budget to represent line items that are not the same as the numbers in the budget. Even though a table in the CAFR may use terms like “revenues” and “expenditures,” the fact is that in the CAFR, there are “expenditures” that are not cash expenses at all. A liability reported in the CAFR can change from year to year for reasons sometimes having nothing to do with cash expenditures. Yet, the “expenditures” will appear to go up and down with little relationship to actual cash flows.

This is why the net difference between “revenues” and “expenses” is called a “change in net assets” in the CAFR. The CAFR is reporting on balance sheet items, whereas the budget does not.

For the average resident who is unfamiliar with the GASB standards and the peculiar way that a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report has to be constructed, trying to read a CAFR could lead to confusion and incorrect conclusions. Even someone with an accounting background can have problems comprehending a CAFR.

So why is the CAFR so difficult to understand compared to a budget? Because municipal budgets are intended to be understood by the general public. The CAFR is not. The general public can participate in the creation of the operating budget and can understand the budget process to a greater or lesser degree.

The target audience for the CAFR are the finance professionals who are very familiar with the GASB standards and can get a better picture of the City’s financial health by looking at all aspects and activities and future liabilities. A CAFR is required to be audited by an independent auditing firm. Budgets are not.

Hopefully, this article helps explain the differences between the budget and the CAFR. The City encourages our residents to participate in the budget planning process and review the FY2013 Proposed Operating Budget, which is posted on the City’s website at www.capecoral.net. The City’s annual CAFR also is posted online for reading.
City Adds Bike Lanes on Beach Parkway

City crews completed the installation of new bike lanes on Beach Parkway from Oasis Boulevard to Agualinda Boulevard and on Agualinda Boulevard from Beach Parkway to Cape Coral Parkway. These facilities complement the existing bike lane network present within the southwest Cape. The lanes tie to the Veterans Parkway bike path on the north and to bike lanes on El Dorado Parkway to the south.

New Sidewalks under Construction

Using in-house work crews, the City has new sidewalks under construction on SE 10th Street from Cultural Park Boulevard to Country Club Boulevard. This project is being funded through the Community Development Block Grant program.

Due to budget constraints, the only new sidewalks being added are those funded through competitive grants programs. The City has managed to secure from state and federal grant programs more than $4 million to build 12 new sidewalk projects within the next five fiscal years.

The projects include:

- SW 20th Avenue: Trafalgar Boulevard to Veterans Parkway ($165,450 FY2013)
- Savona Parkway: Chiquita Boulevard to Agualinda Boulevard ($246,074 FY2013)
- Bolado Parkway: Del Prado Boulevard to SE 20th Court ($150,000 FY2013)
- Academy Boulevard: Veterans Parkway to Nicholas Parkway ($570,000 FY2014)
- Oasis-Gleason Boulevard: Beach Parkway to Surfside Boulevard ($520,000 FY2014)
- Cape Coral Parkway: Dead End to Agualinda Boulevard ($480,323 FY2016)
- Chiquita: SR-78 to NW 4th Street ($275,539 FY2016)
- Chiquita: SW 47th Terrace to SW 32nd Terrace ($740,209 FY2016)
- Diplomat Parkway: Del Prado Boulevard to NE 24th Avenue ($378,503 FY2016)
- Diplomat Parkway: Andalusia Boulevard to NE 13th Avenue plus local connectors ($310,502 FY2017)
- SE 8th Street: Cultural Park Boulevard to Santa Barbara Boulevard ($265,568 FY2017)
- SW 20th Avenue: Veterans Parkway to SW 30th Terrace ($122,712 FY2017)

Please note that the requirements to make a proposed sidewalk project competitive vary depending on the particulars of the grant program. Once a project is awarded, the funding cannot be transferred to another location. If you would like a sidewalk project to be considered for a potential grant application, please contact the Citizens Action Center at 574-0425.

The City has made considerable improvements to the bicycle-pedestrian network and as of today Cape Coral has 194 miles of sidewalks (including private roadways); 110 miles of bike lanes; nine miles of bike paths; and, nearly four miles of multi-use paths.

Cape Coral Parks & Recreation Department Receives Two Excellence Awards

The City of Cape Coral Parks & Recreation Department was selected to receive two professional excellence awards from the Florida Recreation & Park Association including the 2012 Agency Excellence Award for Category II (agencies serving populations between 150,000-199,999), and a 2012 Print Media Excellence Award for this year’s Summer Camp Guide.

The Association’s Agency Excellence Award is given annually to recognize and honor the state’s most outstanding Community Park, Recreation and/or Leisure Service agencies. Judging was based on each agency’s performance in a wide variety of areas including park development, recreational, ADA, aquatic and athletic programming, leisure and cultural arts, fitness and wellness activities, promotion of programs, administration, and citizen involvement. The Agency Excellence Award is the highest honor an agency can receive at the state level.

The Excellence Awards for Print Media are presented annually to agencies that have significantly contributed to the public’s increased awareness and recognition of public parks, recreation and leisure service programs.

Both excellence awards were officially presented at the Florida Recreation & Park Association’s Annual Awards Ceremony in Orlando in August. For more information about the Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department or to sign up for upcoming programs, visit www.CapeParks.com or call (239) 573-3128.

City Sets Lot Mowing Assessment Amounts

The City of Cape Coral provides lot mowing services to vacant properties to assist with maintaining open spaces. Vacant lots are mowed several times each year, most of which occur during the rainy season. Lot mowing services are billed through an assessment included on the annual property tax bills.

There are four lot mowing districts and the annual rates are $20.79 in Districts 2, 3, 4 and $28 in District 1.
October is “Adopt a Dog” Month

Consider if there is room in your home and heart for a loving, canine companion

Margery Facklam certainly got it right with her popular quote. A dog can bring unconditional love and an abundance of joy into your life. With thousands of available dogs waiting in rescue facilities throughout the country, the American Humane Society has tabbed October as “Adopt a Dog” month, and more specifically, adopt a “shelter” dog.

In Lee County, there are several organizations that provide adoption services for dogs. Three main agencies in Fort Myers are Lee County Animal Services, Gulf Coast Humane Society and Animal Refuge Center. In addition, several not-for-profit organizations in Southwest Florida provide rescue services for purebred dogs ranging from greyhounds and small breeds to Great Danes. Petfinder.com is an excellent database to search for a variety of purebred dogs available for adoption. A quick Google search also can pull up area adoption agencies.

According to the American Humane Association, about 8 million stray and unwanted animals are taken in by shelters across the country. Shelter euthanasia is the leading cause of death for dogs and cats in the United States. Giving an abandoned or stray dog a new lease on life is one of the greatest gifts one can provide, and this is the primary focus of “Adopt-a-Dog” month. This single act of kindness can bring years of unconditional love to you and your family from your new canine companion.

— Margery Facklam, author

Chester Street Resource Center is Dedicated

History is important to a community and its citizens as is the need to access government services. Recognizing this importance, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) in partnership with the City and the Cape Coral Construction Industry Association (CCCIA) has transformed former Fire Station #1 into a police substation and citizen resource center.

Fire Station #1 was the location for Cape Coral’s first City Hall, public meeting space and voting precinct. The building holds much historical significance to the city. Keeping and renovating the building to serve the community was a priority for the CRA and CCCIA. The project was funded by the CRA and the City with a generous donation of labor and materials from the CCCIA and its membership.

The building at 4816 Chester Street is now called the Chester Street Resource Center and was dedicated on July 19. The exterior work has been completed and includes a mural on the north wall. The first phase of the interior work also is done. Police and City staff soon will be occupying the building, bringing back to life a true piece of Cape Coral history.

Cape City Clerk Earns Master Municipal Clerk Designation

Cape Coral’s City Clerk Rebecca vanDeutekom has earned the designation of Master Municipal Clerk (MMC), which is awarded by the International Institute of Municipal Clerks, Inc.

“We congratulate Rebecca for achieving this significant milestone for municipal clerks,” said City Manager John Szerlag. “She invested a great deal of her time and effort into accomplishing this task, which is a testament to her dedication to her profession and the City of Cape Coral.”

IIMC grants the master clerk designations only to those municipal clerks who complete demanding education requirements, and who have a record of significant contributions to their local government, their community and state.

The International Institute of Municipal Clerks was founded in 1947 and has 10,300 members throughout the United States, Canada and 15 other countries. The mission of this global non-profit corporation is to enhance the education opportunities and professional development of its diverse membership.

“In light of the nature of change these days, lifelong learning is not only desirable, it is necessary to keep pace with growing demands and changing needs of the citizens we serve,” said Brenda Cirtin, IIMC President. “I am honored to endorse this designation for Rebecca and applaud the role she plays in Cape Coral.”

Dinah, an 11 1/2-year-old Great Dane, was adopted by the City’s PIO in 2001.
Cape Police Introduce New Patrol Vehicles

The Cape Coral Police Department is rolling out 40 new Dodge Chargers to replace older vehicles that are patrolling the street. The department opted for the Dodge, in part because the classic Ford Crown Victoria (that has been used for nearly two decades) is being discontinued.

This gave the department an opportunity to look at several different options. In the end, the Dodge Charger was chosen. The new Charger boasts the power and functionality of the V8 but the fuel economy of a V6. Multiplied by 40 vehicles, driven over the course of the car’s lifetime, that is a significant cost savings in fuel.

And with the iconic black & white paint scheme and new efficient LED light package, the cars are sure to be noticed by our residents.

City Continues Renovation of the Nicholas Annex

The City is continuing with renovations and upgrades to the Nicholas Annex, formerly the old City Hall building on Nicholas Parkway. Selective interior demolition has been completed, and bids were awarded for contracts to complete other upgrades. This includes installing a new HVAC system, a new fire alarm system and a significant amount of plumbing and electrical system repairs and upgrades. Once these projects are completed, the next steps will be to apply new coats of paint, install new floor coverings and ceiling tiles.

The City currently has about 30 staff members working in the facility. Office space also has been let to the Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization. Work is scheduled to be finished by late fall, and staff with Public Works will relocate into the building, bringing the number of employees occupying the building to 80.

Sun Splash to Wrap Up Successful Season

Even though early season rains cut the number of operating days at Sun Splash Family Waterpark, the facility still had a successful 20th anniversary season. Twenty events and special promotions were held throughout the season to celebrate 20 years of providing fun, recreational opportunities to our residents and visitors. Thousands of guests participated in the activities, and the park provided a safe environment with their award-winning lifeguard staff.

“Family Fun Nights” were a huge success with the park reaching capacity at almost every event. Sun Splash will hold its final “Family Fun Night” of the season on Saturday, September 8 from 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Tickets are only $7 per person for Cape Coral residents and $9 per person for non-Cape Coral residents. Admission is on a first-come, first-serve basis, so plan to arrive early. Same day ticket holders will have the option to pay an extra $3 to stay for the special evening hours.

Food service will remain open during the half-hour between the park’s daily hours of 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the beginning of Family Fun Night at 5:30 p.m.

Sun Splash’s Friday “Aqua Theatre Nights” also continued to be very successful this season with this year’s featured films being “Bolt,” “Surf’s Up,” and “Yogi Bear.” Park guests were able to view the movie on a giant inflatable movie screen that can be seen while floating in the Family Pool. Due to the popularity of Aqua Theatre, the staff plans to have them back next season.

Sun Splash also had a terrific response to the second year of its “Super Snack Card.” With the card, park guests could pre-purchase their choice of 10 food/beverage items for only $25 (season pass holders received a 15 percent discount) – providing up to $15 savings per card over in-park prices and giving families a convenient and affordable way to enjoy refreshments throughout the park. More than 1,200 “Super Snack Cards” have been sold, and the cards will be available for purchase through the end of the season.

While the season is wrapping up, there is still some time left to slide into Sun Splash. The waterpark is open weekends, Saturday and Sunday, from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. through September 30. Stop by and cool off, and look for some late-season specials and group deals. Visit www.SunSplashWaterpark.com to find out about money-saving offers and register to receive free email updates. Also, don’t forget to follow Sun Splash on Facebook and Twitter. For more information, call (239) 574-0558.

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City Schedules Next Canal Cleanup for October 27

The City of Cape Coral’s Environmental Resources Division has scheduled a canal cleanup event for Saturday, October 27 from 8 a.m. – noon. This will be the second clean-up effort this year.

The earlier event in March had 70 volunteers who participated and collected about 1,400 pounds of debris from the Cape’s waterways and coastal areas. Volunteers included boaters, kayakers and walkers. Several boaters cleaned canals near the Yacht Club boat ramp, while kayakers cleaned areas in the North Spreader Waterway. Volunteers picked up trash at Horton Park, Jaycee Park, Bernice Braden Park and the area along Old Burnt Store Road near Sirenia Vista Park. Glass and plastic were the most common items found.

The Canal Cleanup event helps beautify the city, fosters a sense of community and raises awareness about litter. For more information about the upcoming cleanup in October, call (239) 541-1735.

Most litter is unintentional; however, some is just carelessness such as a fast food bag not thrown into a trash bin, a plastic bag blowing out of the back of a truck or boat, or a commercial dumpster that is not properly covered.

It is easy to help eliminate litter. Equip your car with a litterbag. Make sure trash cans and dumpsters are properly covered. Use trash cans provided at public spaces. Do not discard cigarette butts – this can be a fire danger. Become aware of trash, and take the initiative to pick it up. If you live on a waterway, try collecting trash that accumulates using a rake or net, and put it with your weekly garbage pickup. If there are large items, call our Citizen Action Center at 574-0425.

Special thanks to our Canal Clean-up sponsors:

- Keep Lee County Beautiful
- Keep America Beautiful - Great American Cleanup
- Waste Pro
- CiCi’s Pizza
- Papa John’s Pizza

Groundbreaking Ceremony for U.S. Army Reserve Center

On July 28, the first symbolic shovel of dirt was tossed and kicked off the newest development in Cape Coral as several officials took part in the groundbreaking for construction of the new U.S. Army Reserve Center. Mayor John Sullivan and State Representative Gary Aubuchon joined Army Colonel Patrick Briley and representatives from the state, military and veterans groups to celebrate the newest addition to the city’s Veterans Investment Zone (VIZ) area.

This $13.5 million project includes the construction of a Reserve Training Facility (37,500 square feet), a Vehicle Maintenance Shop (7,650 square feet), and a Storage Facility (1,500 square feet). When completed, the Reserve Center will have a full-time staff of 10 Army and civilian employees serving more than 300 assigned area reservists from the 365th Engineer and the 451st Quartermaster companies. It is expected to be completed in 2013.

Dana Brunett, Cape Coral’s Economic Development Director was on site for the groundbreaking ceremony and shared the following statements regarding this important event.

“The Army Reserve Center, along with the VA Clinic across the street has created a new energy in the Veterans Investment Zone,” said Dana Brunett, Cape Coral’s Economic Development Director. “Their presence will no doubt spur additional projects in this area that will bring additional job creation and investment, not to mention the construction jobs and increased tax base to our city.”

Brunett added that these projects in the VIZ are examples of several areas of influence the City is trying to create throughout Cape Coral in support of new jobs and enhancing City revenues.
Del Prado Boulevard Project
Named “Project of the Year”

The Del Prado Boulevard widening project from Kismet Parkway to Pine Island Road was named “Project of the Year” in the Transportation category by the American Public Works Association – Florida Chapter. The project was completed by Balfour Beatty and featured new bridges and an impressive linear park.

Although the design for the Del Prado widening included 10-foot-wide, multi-use paths for the linear park, the City added the concept of installing fitness equipment as an additional asset to this already beautiful area. The linear park now features eight fitness stations, park benches, bike racks, trash cans and dog waste stations. The total distance of the park is about two miles, which easily allows for a variety of activities including use of fitness equipment, jogging, rollerblading, biking or walking a dog. The sidewalk also is lighted for evening use as well.

The linear park fitness option was completed with the assistance of a $60,000 Community Development Block Grant. By adding the fitness component to the Del Prado plan, this project improves the quality of life for the growing number of residents in Cape Coral.

Sun Splash and Yacht Club
Community Pool Receive 5-Star Rating from Starfish Aquatics

Sun Splash Family Waterpark and the Yacht Club Community Pool, both operated by the City of Cape Coral, have received the prestigious 5-star rating from Starfish Aquatics Institute (SAI), an independent auditor of aquatic facilities. A 5-star rating is the highest rating an aquatic facility can receive for aquatic safety and lifeguard performance.

“Very few aquatic facilities qualify to receive this honor,” said Leslie Donovan, President of SAI. “This rating represents a tremendous commitment to safety and training, and exceptional performance by the lifeguard staff on duty at the time.”

SAI conducts unannounced performance audits of the facility’s lifeguards and management staff throughout the year.

“The safety of our visitors is the No. 1 priority at our facilities, and I am very proud of our team and this award,” said Parks and Recreation Director Steve Pohlman. “The credit goes to our managers Sandra Grenier and Barbara Dickinson and their professional staff who work every day to make a day at the pool or Waterpark a safe and enjoyable experience.”

SAI is one of the largest lifeguard, swim instructor and pool operator certifying agencies in the United States. The Institute offers state-of-the-art training courses and provides services such as performance audits to the aquatic industry to improve safety and reduce the risk of drowning. Both Sun Splash and the Yacht Club Community Pool are independent Training Centers for the Starfish Aquatics Institute, and as a Training Center, they must participate in the Institute’s Star Review risk management program. The City utilizes SAI lifeguard training and swim lesson protocols.

Take Pride in the Cape Program Receives Florida League of Cities “Spirit Award”

The Florida League of Cities awarded the 2012 “Spirit Award” to the City’s “Take Pride in the Cape” program. The Florida Municipal Achievement Awards Program recognizes innovations and excellence in municipal government. The “Take Pride in the Cape” program was started in 2009 by a group of volunteers who wanted to help the City address blight issues caused by a rapid increase in foreclosures. The program was the brainchild of former Councilmember Gloria Tate, who issued a challenge to the community to step up and take action to address blight. At the time of the program’s inception, Cape Coral was one of the top cities in the nation for foreclosures.

Led by a retired Cape Coral code enforcement supervisor, the group of volunteers began focusing on doing yard work on the increasing number of abandoned, foreclosed properties. They quickly went to work mowing and cleaning properties on their Fridays and Saturdays. They used their own equipment and paid for their gas. The volunteers became affectionately referred to as a “roving band of itinerant landscapers.”

They did not toil on their own for long, though, as these dedicated volunteers quickly captured the attention of others. Take Pride volunteers soon received assistance from Keep Lee County Beautiful, Waste Pro and the City of Cape Coral’s Code Compliance Division.

Volunteers did not stop at mowing and cleaning. They have painted houses and commercial buildings, boarded abandoned properties, and mowed and landscaped properties for residents in desperate financial situations.

To date, the volunteers have cleaned and mowed more than 850 abandoned properties. The program has provided more than $1 million in savings and cost avoidance to the City of Cape Coral. The Take Pride in the Cape volunteers have become a national model for community preservation and community teamwork.

The City of Cape Coral cannot say “thank you” enough to all the volunteers for their continuing efforts. They certainly are one of the “gems” of Cape Coral.

If you want to get involved with Take Pride in the Cape, please call Code Compliance at 239-574-0613.
The 2012 Hurricane Season ends on November 30, and we have reached the mid-point of the season. To date, the only tropical activity for Cape Coral were the effects of Tropical Storm Debby in late June. The combination of several days of rain and windy conditions resulted in certain locations in the city experiencing high levels of water. The most important thing to remember from Tropical Storm Debby is this event brought significant rainfall, and this was only a tropical storm located about 200 miles from Cape Coral. Had it been a closer, stronger storm, the results could have been much worse.

As a refresher, it is important for everyone to remain familiar with the evacuation zone map. The map will be referenced whenever the County calls for an evacuation. Be sure to “Know Your Zone” and whether you live in the Red “A” zone, Orange “B” zone or Yellow “C” zone.

What is the best way to plan for the storm season? Develop a family disaster plan which is in effect year-round. Remember that hurricanes and tropical storms are not the only threats in Southwest Florida. We are also susceptible to power outages due to lightning and regular storm events, tornadoes, minor to moderate flooding, and wildfires – any of which can result in you being asked to stay in your home for an extended period or potentially evacuate temporarily.

How do you develop a family disaster plan that can help you during any event? Follow these steps below, thoroughly review them with your family members, and continue to pay attention to local weather forecasts throughout the year.

- Discuss the type of hazards that could affect your family. Know your home's vulnerability to storm surge, flooding and wind.
- Locate a safe room or the safest areas in your home for each hurricane hazard. In certain circumstances the safest areas may not be your home but within your community.
- Determine escape routes from your home and places to meet.
- Have an out-of-state friend as a family contact, so all your family members have a single point of contact.
- Make a plan now for what to do with your pets if you need to evacuate.
- Post emergency telephone numbers by your phones and make sure your children know how and when to call 911.
- Check your insurance coverage - flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance.
- Stock non-perishable emergency supplies and a Disaster Supply Kit.
- Use a NOAA weather radio. Remember to replace its battery every six months, as you do with your smoke detectors.
- Take First Aid, CPR and disaster preparedness classes.

Additionally, detailed disaster-preparedness information for this area is available on the Lee County website, www.lee-county.com. If you do not have access to the Internet, a free “All Hazards Guide” with extensive preparation information is available from the Fire Department administrative offices and from City Hall on Cultural Park Blvd. It also is available at the Cape Coral Public Library and the Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce.

CRA Steps into Social Media

The South Cape CRA has taken steps to enter the social media world as a means to communicate better with residents and visitors to South Cape as well as developers and investors. Yes, the CRA has a recently enhanced website, and now the agency has a Facebook page, uses Twitter, and soon will be “live” with a LinkedIn presence.

These social networking sites augment traditional marketing efforts, and recognize the realities of the new digital world and the need to reach out to tell the South Cape story.

Our Facebook page focuses on promoting the activities in the CRA and at the businesses – restaurants, clubs, shops and services. It is an effort to connect with people to “put feet on the street.”

LinkedIn will focus on promoting the CRA to site selectors, investors and developers. It will concentrate on the criteria that business needs to know and understand to make informed decisions about coming to South Cape.

Numerous studies have shown that social networking sites help a government agency effectively and efficiently distribute information. Social networking can expand outreach capabilities and improve ability to interact with and serve residents and visitors.

Check out the CRA website at www.southcape.net and follow us on Facebook at South Cape CRA and Twitter at SouthCapeCRA.
City Adds Expenditure Detail to Online Open Government Portal

The City of Cape Coral’s online “Open Government” page provides a gateway for residents to obtain information about how the City of Cape Coral spends tax dollars. The page can be accessed at www.capecoral.net in the orange navigation box on the left column.

Visitors now will see six icons that provide windows into the operations of Cape Coral’s city government. The CAFR, Budget, Monthly Financial Reports and Salaries features became active in 2011. The newest addition is the Expenditures area, which is an interactive feature where citizens can view up-to-date City department expenditures for any period of time. The new feature allows the residents to drill down to specific details regarding items and services purchased from vendors.

The City’s “Open Government” page provides more transparency to our citizens and allows them to learn more about the day-to-day operations of their City government. The next feature to be built will be the Revenue area, which will be similar to the Expenditures drill-down and will provide a searchable database of unaudited City/departmental revenues.

Horton Park Boat Ramp Repairs/Improvements

The Horton Park Boat Ramp was temporarily closed this summer from June 11 to August 2 for repairs and improvements. This included:

- Filling in a large hole at the end of the concrete ramp
- Reattaching concrete slabs near the bottom of the ramp
- Extending the concrete ramp into the canal to reduce holes created by boat propellers while powering onto trailers
- Adding traction material to the steep boat ramp
- Construction of an ADA-accessible pathway alongside the boat ramp

City Council awarded the project to CSJ of Southwest Florida, Inc. in the amount of $81,658, which was funded by a $100,000 grant received from the Florida Boating Improvement Program. Design and inspections were performed by Coastal Engineering, Inc. with City staff assisting with project coordination and inspections. While wet weather did delay construction, the project was completed within the contract performance period of 90 days, and the ramp opened temporarily for the 4th of July holiday to accommodate area boaters.

During closure, boaters were directed to use the Rosen Park Boat Ramp facility a few miles to the north of Horton Park or the ramps at the Cape Coral Yacht Club. The repairs and improvements made at Horton Park should allow for safer and better use of the boat ramp.

Council Leaves Annual Stormwater Fee at $75

City Council approved the annual stormwater fee of $75 per equivalent residential unit (ERU). The fee has remained at $75 since 2005 and is collected on the property tax bill as a non ad valorem addition. The City of Cape Coral has an extensive stormwater management system in place to handle the heavy rains during the summer months. The annual stormwater fee supports several components of the City’s stormwater system. These components include:

- Street Sweeping
- Swale Regrading
- Drain Pipe Replacement
- Canal Maintenance
- Catch Basin Maintenance
- Drainage Management
- Surface Water Management

Sun Splash Lifeguard Receives Shining Star Award

Kaylee Ludden, a lifeguard at Sun Splash Family Waterpark, was awarded the Starfish Aquatics Institute (SAI) Shining Star Award. SAI Auditors can give this award to individuals who consistently exceed the 5-Star level during an unannounced SAI Star Review.

This is the highest recognition a lifeguard can receive, and auditors rarely award the honor to an individual lifeguard. Senior Lifeguard Eric Jones is the only other lifeguard from Sun Splash to receive this prestigious award. Eric received his award in 2006.

Congratulations Kaylee!
New Veteran-Owned Business Gets “Smart” in CRA District

With the new VA Clinic opening this year, the new Army Reserve Center coming in 2013, Cape Coral is becoming recognized for its commitment to our military veterans. It is not surprising to hear that a rather unique, “techie” repair facility owned by a veteran just opened in the CRA.

Dena Jackson is that veteran, and she owns “The Smart Repair” business located at 4713 SE 15th Avenue in downtown Cape Coral within the CRA District. The business focuses on repairing iPhones, iPads, and other smartphones and devices.

You did not know these fancy electronics could be repaired? You are not alone. Many people mistakenly or unknowingly throw away these devices when they break a screen or become otherwise inoperable. That can change with Cape Coral’s first repair facility for these specialty niche items.

As a single mom, Dena wanted to do more for her family and owning a business would give her more opportunities to grow and provide for her kids’ future. As a military veteran, Dena sustained a service-related injury while serving in the Army in 2002 and 2003. Her motivation for starting the repair business came from her own frustration with trying to find a repair facility for her own iPhone when it needed fixing. The experience convinced her that other smartphone owners must have similar frustrations. Using her education background and experience in the IT field, the idea of The Smart Repair business was born.

The City’s Economic Development Office has been involved in getting this new business going and is very interested in more of these types of high tech centers in Cape Coral.

Anyone interested in learning more about this business can do so at www.thesmartrepair.com website. Economic Development also would like to hear from more veterans who are interested in opening a business. Please contact the office at www.bizcapecoral.com or at (239) 574-0444.

Caloosa Football Field Improvements

The City of Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department along with the Cape Coral Junior Football Association recently partnered to complete the field renovation at the Caloosa Football Complex. The project involved converting two old softball fields into a second football field. The new football field will allow the organization to play two games at the same time and provide more practice area.

The project included removal of two light poles and relocation of the lighting fixtures to existing light poles. Grading of the field was completed, and 15 tandem trucks of dirt fill along with 35,000 square feet of sod were used to cover the clay area of the old softball infield. In addition, a complete new irrigation system was installed. The final part of this renovation will be the installation of the goal posts, which should be completed before the first home game on September 1.

For more information on the Cape Coral Junior Football Association, contact Jay Taylor at (239) 677-6860.

Special Populations Receives Extraordinary Gift of Flight & Fancy

Thanks to a generous donation of $10,000 from Cape Coral residents Fred and Jane Mohr, the Freida B. Smith Special Populations Center participants and general public soon will be able to experience the educational and delightful benefits of a butterfly house and gardens. The backyard picnic area at the Center is being transformed into a charming, passive, secret garden filled with native butterfly-attracting plants, a lovely fish pond and a magnificent butterfly house. Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department personnel have been invaluable in this transformation.

The butterfly garden and house is being built to expose Special Pops participants to the wonderful world of butterflies, and they will be involved in all aspects of the ongoing project.

Participants will gain knowledge about what to look for during the life cycle of a butterfly such as the eggs, caterpillars, chrysalis, parts of their bodies, the importance of host and nectar plants, and enjoying related art projects. In addition, they will learn the responsibility by assisting in the maintenance of the outdoor picnic area, the inside of the butterfly house, as well as conducting scheduled public tours.

Developing butterfly areas is good for our environment since butterflies are becoming an increasingly rare sight in the ever-changing Florida landscape. Butterflies are important plant pollinators and also provide a beautiful and peaceful presence for all to enjoy. Currently, Special Pops participants are busy painting flower pots, marking plants, mixing soils, as well as planting the pots and garden.

Local businesses graciously contributed in-kind donations, and this interactive project is also being supported by volunteers from the Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife and the Guardian Angels for Special Populations. Both of these groups welcome new volunteers in their efforts to protect our environment and provide for individuals with disabilities. For more information about the butterfly garden and Special Pops, please call (239) 574-0574.

Once again, Special Populations thanks the Mohr family for making this dream into a reality. Their generous donation is making a difference in our community.

City to Hire Manager to Oversee Utilities Extension Project

The City will be hiring a Utilities Extension Manager to oversee the utilities project, which will extend water, gravity sewer, irrigation lines and new roads to three approved areas in Cape Coral. SW 6/7 will be the first area to receive utilities and is the final area south of Pine Island Road to be connected to the services. North 1 and North 2 will be the next areas, although the plan is to extend utilities to properties in North 2 before moving to North 1.

Council approved moving forward with the utilities project in February, and City staff has been working together in a team approach to establish a timeline and process for completing SW 6/7. In July, Council approved two resolutions—one to hire the Utilities Extension Manager and the other to begin negotiations with the highest ranked consulting/engineering firm.

City Manager John Szerlag expressed the importance of having a point person on City staff to ensure that the utilities project moves along as seamlessly as possible. The manager will work with the construction/engineering/inspection firm throughout the plan review and bid process, and will oversee the construction contractors. The position will report to the City Manager’s office.
After 35-Year Career, Division Chief Tom Tomich Set to Retire

Long-time firefighter will wrap up his service to the citizens of Cape Coral on October 1

In 1977, Jimmy Carter was President, gas was 65-cents per gallon, Seattle Slew won the Kentucky Derby, and the Space Shuttle “Enterprise” made its first atmospheric flight. The original “Star Wars” movie premiered, and “Annie Hall” won the Academy Award for best picture. Top on the music charts was Fleetwood Mac’s “Rumors” album. A little closer to home, 1977 marked the year that Tom Tomich became a full-time, paid firefighter with the Cape Coral Fire Department.

Tomich worked his way up the ranks being promoted to engineer, lieutenant and captain (the equivalent of today’s battalion chief), and eventually to division chief in 2003. Tomich will retire on October 1, bringing to a close the career of one of the longest-tenured employees in Cape Coral. Tomich took time to reflect on a 35-year career that has seen much in the way of growth and change, and one that he likens to being a part of his family.

How did you begin your career in the fire service?

I began as a volunteer for Cape Coral Fire Department at the end of high school. My paid career started in 1977 when I was hired full time. We had two fire stations and less than 30 employees, including the two chiefs and two fire inspectors. Fire Station 1 on Chester Street was the Fire Department headquarters at the time.

What do you remember most about the Department those first few years?

In the first few years, the Department became a very customer service-oriented organization. We would do anything for people that needed to be done. We were brought up to treat the public the way we would want a special member of our own family treated. That really has not changed and has remained our credo.

How have the Department, the City, and the people changed over these 35 years?

The Department has grown in response to the remarkable growth that the Cape experienced and has done so in a professional manner. The City has evolved into an important seat of government that is staffed by very caring employees. The Fire Department currently runs as many calls in a month as we ran each year back in the 70’s. This year, we will respond to more than 19,000 calls for service.

The firefighting profession today is more dangerous for our personnel due to a variety of issues. The economy, for one, has caused some people to have to modify their homes and garages to accommodate additional living quarters for family. These layouts work for them, but when a fire breaks out, traditional access and escape routes are sometimes cut off, and our firefighters can get disoriented and trapped more easily. In addition, hurricane impact windows and doors not only make it hard to break in to a home or business, but they also can make it impossible for disoriented occupants to break out of a smoke-filled burning home. Although we run a lot of medical calls, we are busy with structural firefighting. We do a lot more than just fight fires. We do whatever it takes to keep our residents and visitors safe.

What is your most satisfying accomplishment/achievement?

I would like to have studied architecture. But my work here has been tremendously rewarding.

What do you think you would have done for a career if you had not chosen to be a firefighter?

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to serve my city and help Chief Van Helden to develop the next generation of leaders for the Fire Department. I am confident that the Department is in good hands as it moves into the future.

What do you remember as being the Department’s biggest challenges as it was growing?

We were constantly planning for additional fire stations and equipment to keep up with growth. We were first to institute fire impact fees so growth would help pay for growth. We knew the Cape Coral Fire Department was going to grow into one of the leaders in South Florida. We have consistently taken on more duties and programs in addition to firefighting, including advanced life support (ALS), special operations, marine/diver rescue, fire prevention/inspections/investigations, public education and emergency management. I remember that there were years when we could not interest people in this profession as a career. Eventually, we had to compete in the marketplace for firefighter/paramedics. Now, our service delivery has become second to none.

Do you have a “fondest” memory?

I have many great memories of the people who came before and after me, people who gave of themselves to the people of this City and some who made the supreme sacrifice. The Cape Coral Fire Department has always had some of the most dedicated, community-oriented firefighters and chief officers that you can find. That is traditionally inherent to the fire service here in America and around the world.

What direction do you wish for the Department in the years to come?

To continue to offer the best customer service of any municipal fire department in Florida while continuing to be innovative and safety conscious. We have attended far too many fire department funerals in the last 35 years. As a community, we must be there to support the needs of our firefighters and police officers and support the needs of the Fire and Police Departments as a whole – they provide for the public safety and give to the community every day.

What’s next for Tom Tomich after October 1?

I love Cape Coral, always have. Anything I can do to promote and support the Cape, I’ll be there.

Many thanks to Division Chief Tom Tomich for his 35 years of service to the Cape Coral Fire Department and the City of Cape Coral. Enjoy your retirement, Tom. You have earned it.
Code Corner – Parking Vans and Pickups in Residential Areas

The parking of commercial vehicles in residential areas has become a hot topic these past couple of months. The City's parking ordinance restricts the type of commercial vehicles that can be parked at a residence overnight. The ordinance provides several definitions and requirements depending on the type of vehicle. In this article, we will focus on two types of vehicles: pick-up trucks and light vans.

First, let's look at the definition in the ordinance for commercial vehicles.

**Commercial Vehicle:** An agricultural, construction or industrial motor vehicle, or any bus, step van, truck, or truck tractor. The term shall include any motor vehicle (including, but not limited to, automobiles) upon which commercial lettering, as defined herein, has been affixed. The term shall also include, but shall not be limited to, a pickup truck from which the cargo box has been removed. Any motor vehicle with one or more tools (including, but not limited to, a ladder), building materials, or merchandise visible from the street or from abutting residential property, and/or a “commercial rack” that is visible from the street or from abutting residential property shall be deemed a commercial vehicle. A passenger automobile or sports utility vehicle (SUV) containing commercial lettering shall not be considered a commercial vehicle for purposes of this section so long as the commercial lettering on the vehicle does not contain any reference to the residential address at which the automobile is parked.

Now, let's look at how the ordinance defines light vans and pick-up trucks.

**Light Van:** Any motor vehicle having a generally rectangular bulk, which is licensed and registered for operation upon public highways that has a carrying capacity of no more than one ton and/or no more than nine passengers.

**Pick-up Truck:** Any motor vehicle designed primarily for the transportation of property within a permanently attached open cargo box and having a gross motor vehicle weight of no more than 17,500 pounds, a height of no more than 82 inches (measured from the ground to the vehicle's highest point excluding antennae), no more than six wheels, and no more than two sides.

If a light van or pick-up truck meets the criteria within the above definition of “commercial vehicle,” they can be parked on residential property as long as they meet the following requirements:

- All commercial messages are hidden from view using covering that attaches and can remain on the vehicle. No car covers.
- All commercial equipment, ladders, tools, etc. are removed from the vehicle.

We hope this helps explain one section of the commercial parking ordinance as it addresses light vans and pick-up trucks. If you want to read the entire parking ordinance section, go to the City website at www.capecoral.net. Under “Laws and Codes” in the orange navigation box, select “City Codes and Land Use.” The parking ordinance can be found in our Land Use and Development Regulations, Article III, Section 3.12.

If you have any suggestions for future topics, please call Code Compliance at (239) 574-0613 or contact Frank Cassidy, Division Manager at (239) 574-0684 or by email at fcassidy@capecoral.net.

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**Deadline Approaching to Renew Business Tax Receipt**

Business tax receipts and competency licenses (aka business licenses) will expire on September 30. Business owners are reminded to stop by City Hall and renew their business tax receipt or license. Renewals also can be processed online at www.capecoral.net. Go to “Pay” in the orange navigation box and select “Business License.” Payment can be made by phone using a credit or debit card at (239) 574-0430. The license renewal period opened on July 1.

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**2012 City Championship Golf Tournament Scheduled for October at Coral Oaks**

The 2012 City Championship will be held the weekend of October 20-21 with a kick off Pro-Am to be held on Friday, October 19. The entry fee is $125 for the two-day, 36-hole, stroke play City Championship tournament and includes greens and cart fees for two rounds, practice range balls, tee gifts, Saturday lunch and a Sunday awards banquet. The Pro-Am entry fee is $75. Amateur players who participate in both the Pro-Am and City Championship will receive a special discounted entry fee of $180. Pick up a registration form at the course or access one on the Coral Oaks website after September 15 (www.CoralOaks.com).

In addition to the annual City Championship, Coral Oaks Golf Course offers Men’s and Ladies’ Golf Associations, junior golf programs, golf instruction, clinics, golf schools, charity fundraising events and special discounts for group play outings. Our season pass memberships are a good value for golfers who play more than two times per week.

The Cape Coral Junior Golf Association’s Junior Golf Program was held in June and July at Coral Oaks Golf Course and the program was once again a huge success with 250 children registered and attendance of 176 children per week. Thanks to all the volunteers who continue to make this community program the great success it is.

**Summer Rates Still Available**

Coral Oaks’ summer rates will be in effect through October 31. Golfers can play 18 holes for just $28 for Cape Coral residents before noon and $25 after noon, including cart. The twilight golf rate is $22 every day after 3:30 p.m. You can book online tee times and get special Internet offers on the home page of the Coral Oaks website at www.CoralOaksGolf.com.

If you have interest in any golfing programs, golf outings, group bookings or would like to hold a banquet or party at Coral Oaks, please call us at (239) 573-3100 or visit the website.
After School & School’s Out Day Programs

The City of Cape Coral’s Wm. “Bill” Austen Youth Center, Eagle Skate Park and Youth Services Division offer after-school programs, child care, “school’s out” day programs and activities for youth ages 3 – 18. For more information, stop by the Youth Center at 315 SW 2nd Ave, call (239) 242-3950 or visit us online at www.CapeParks.com.

The Youth Center offers T.I.G.E.R.S (Teamwork Involving Group activities, Exercises, Recreation and Sports), a Department of Children & Families licensed (License #C20LE0066) after-school program. This program, for children in kindergarten through 8th grade, is full of education, fun and safety. Students enjoy homework assistance, sports, arts and crafts, and games. The program is Monday – Friday from 2 p.m. – 6 p.m. and the cost is only $30/week. Extended care is available until 8 p.m. for an additional $10/week. With a state-of-the-art playground, computer stations, basketball, ping-pong and air hockey, the Youth Center is equipped to meet the needs of any child. Many local schools also provide free bus transportation to the center.

If your child is looking to join a specialty after-school adventure, they may like the E.A.G.L.E.S. (Exciting Afterschool Games & Lessons in Exercise & Skateboarding) after school program at Eagle Skate Park. Participants are fully supervised and enjoy private skate time at the skate park, homework assistance, sports and games. The facility includes an air-conditioned building to cool off and an 1800-watt Bose surround sound system to listen to the latest music. This program is Monday – Friday from 2 p.m. – 6 p.m. for only $30/week with a skate park membership. Students can stay and skate free at the park for the remainder of the day.

In addition to programs at the Youth Center/Skate Park, the Youth Services Division offers Early Birds programs and After School Adventures at Cape Coral Oasis Charter School and Christa McAuliffe Elementary that are open to charter school students only. In these programs, which are licensed by the Department of Children and Families (License #C20LE0022), children participate in homework time, indoor and outdoor games, arts and crafts, and much more. For details and pricing, call (239) 242-3950.

The Youth Services Division of Parks and Recreation offers school’s out programs throughout the school year when school is not in session. Children enjoy field trips, guest speakers, arts and crafts, and themed activities, along with indoor and outdoor recreation. Upcoming “School’s Out Days” are:

- Monday, September 17
- Monday/Tuesday, October 15 – 16
- Wednesday, November 21.

This program is available for all children in VPK – 8th grade and is offered at Oasis Elementary from 6:30 a.m. – 6 p.m. at a cost of $26 per child per day. For more information or to reserve your child’s spot, call (239) 242-3950.

Waste Pro Creates Customer Page for Cape Coral

Waste Pro has created a web page specifically for their Cape Coral customers. Customers can find the guidelines for trash collection and their weekly pick-up schedules. Information also is posted on recycling and yard waste pickup. The holiday schedule for garbage pickup is available on the website as well. Waste Pro has added the option for residents to request service, file a complaint or pass along a compliment regarding Waste Pro’s service.

The web page address is www.wasteprousa.com/locations/FL/capecoral. The link also is available on the City’s website www.capecoral.net on the “Resident” page under “Residential Services.”

Fishing Location Improvements at Sirenia Vista Park

With the assistance of the Public Works Department, the Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department recently renovated the old Ceitus Boat Lift location at Serenia Vista Park to create an ADA-accessible fishing spot. The work was completed by CW Roberts and Century Fence. The improvements included:
- Concrete ADA pathway with railings to the concrete fishing pad
- Railings and fencing along the perimeter of the fishing pad
- New landscape along the bank
- Two new handicapped parking spots

The contractor costs for installing the pathway, railings, fencing and handicapped parking spots were $20,775.

Please note that fishing is not permitted in the eastside canal of the park as this is a popular location for manatees during the winter months. The park is open from sunrise to sunset every day of the year.

Future plans at Sirenia Vista Park include an elevated boardwalk, manatee educational center, kayak storage building, and improved parking area and utilities.
Employees with the Public Works Maintenance Division did more than just participate in their annual special luncheon this year, which is funded from their soda and snack sales at Everest Annex. While the luncheon is held to recognize the employees’ hard work during the year, this year’s luncheon was a little bit different.

On August 2, the staff invited eight members of the City’s Special Pops program to attend the luncheon as a “thank you” gesture for their hard work. The staff also added an “admission fee” to the luncheon for employees. The fee? Two canned food donations for the Cape Coral Caring Center.

“We wanted to do something for our Special Pops participants who always have a smile for us when they come around with the recycling program,” said Chris Camp, Public Works Engineer. “We also thought it would be nice to use the luncheon as an opportunity to collect canned goods for the Cape Coral Caring Center at a time of the year when people may not be thinking about the Center’s needs.”

The division’s goal was to collect 300 cans of food from 120 employees (hoping some employees would bring more than two cans). Employees were more than generous. About 100 employees donated 502 cans, which was 40 cans more than last year. The items were picked up by the Cape Coral Caring Center and added to their food pantry.

“The employees’ response to the canned food ‘fee’ was better than I expected,” added Camp. “Plus, the attendance of our Special Populations friends made this year’s luncheon much more enjoyable.”

Pine Island Road Widening on Tap Next Year

One of Cape Coral’s most-needed roadway improvements is just around the corner. The widening of State Road 78 (Pine Island Road) from Chiquita Boulevard to Burnt Store Road has been under discussion for several years. With great team effort from City of Cape Coral staff, the Florida Department of Transportation, State Infrastructure Bank, Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization and landowners willing to donate right of way, the long-awaited project finally is coming to fruition.

This widening project will improve evacuation routes and could spur economic development along the Pine Island Road corridor.

Through this partnership, the $8.8 million construction phase will be funded through a State Infrastructure Bank loan at a 3.5 percent interest rate. The principal on the loan will be paid by the Metropolitan Planning Organization at $5 million/year beginning in FY 2016 while the interest on the loan ($900,000) will be paid by the City over four years beginning in FY 2014.

Currently, Florida Department of Transportation is acquiring right of way. The construction phase is expected to go out for bid by April 2013 with construction starting by summer 2013. The much-awaited project will take about two years to complete.

Special Events Season Returns

Cape Coral Parks and Recreation is kicking off another jam-packed event season with a full slate of activities beginning with a free “Movie in the Park” at Jaycee Park on Saturday, September 15. Don’t miss this free family event featuring “Soul Surfer” shown on a giant, inflatable movie screen beginning at sunset (7:30 p.m.). The Parks and Recreation Department is hosting six movie dates in different parks throughout the season, so plan to pack a picnic, some lawn chairs or blankets, and enjoy a “Movie in the Park” under the stars. Check the website for upcoming movies and park locations.

October is packed with events beginning with the return of Cape Bike Night to SE 47th Terrace in downtown Cape Coral on Saturday, October 6 from 5 p.m. – 10 p.m. Both ends of the street will be active. New for this year is the Country stage located near the Dixie Roadhouse. Rock ‘n’ roll still will be on the main stage all evening. Also in October, the Columbus Day Parade/Italian Food Festival will be held on Saturday, October 13 on SE 47th Terrace, and the Kids Festival returns to Jaycee Park on Saturday, October 27 from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

For more information about events taking place in Cape Coral in conjunction with the City’s Special Events Division, visit www.CapeParks.com.
Florida 511 Provides Time-Saving Traffic Info for Cape Residents and Visitors

The Florida Department of Transportation’s (FDOT) bilingual Florida 511 Traveler Information System provides traffic information for Cape Coral residents and visitors on all of Florida’s interstates, including I-75, toll roads and many other metropolitan roadways. Travelers can call 511, visit FL511.com, register for My Florida 511 personalized services or download the 511 app on iTunes for traffic updates, including crashes, congestion, construction and emergency evacuation information. FL511.com features the same traffic information as the phone call, along with hundreds of traffic cameras. Visitors can also learn about Cape Coral by clicking on the Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau link on FL511.com.

By registering for My Florida 511 personalized services at FL511.com, users can hear traffic updates and travel times on their custom routes first when calling 511. Additionally, users can register to receive traffic alerts on these routes via a phone call, email and/or text message. Travelers can customize their alerts based on time of day, day of the week and type or severity of incidents.

Twitter users can now learn about roadway conditions through FDOT’s FL511 Southwest Twitter account and 11 other FL511 regional and major roadway accounts that distribute traffic information from the 511 Traveler Information System. The Twitter accounts are updated through an automated feed from SunGuide, the software that updates the 511 system statewide.

The 511 system is available from cell phones and landlines; however, standard cell phone minutes may apply. All travelers should check 511 before traveling, have a passenger check 511 or pull over to avoid distracted driving.

- **Florida 511 Twitter feeds for traffic updates:**
  - FL511 Statewide
  - FL511 Southwest
  - FL511 I-75
  - FL511 Twitter Feeds

Coconut Festival Returns November 9-11 with .38 Special as Headliner

The most popular City event will return on November 9 – 11. The Cape Coral Coconut Festival will be held at Sun Splash Festival Grounds and will be the largest carnival, concert, and entertainment event in Cape Coral with more than 30,000 people estimated to attend. The main rock ’n roll event will be Saturday, November 10 featuring the popular band “.38 Special.”

On Friday, November 9, the festival will kick off with “COCO Country” featuring a country music star still to be confirmed. Grab your hat and boots and plan to join us for the “Hoedown Throwdown” coconut-style. Also enjoy local talent in the first round of the 2012 Coconut Idol contest. Enjoy the Capital Bank fireworks spectacular, along with food and carnival rides.

On Saturday, the finals of the Coconut Idol contest will be held. Then, local talent “PUSH” will entertain along with a Van Halen Tribute band. Later that evening, “.38 Special” will take the stage singing their hits “Hold On Loosely,” “Caught Up In You,” “Fantasy Girl” and many more top songs.

Saturday’s lineup also will feature the Cheerfest competition, a second fireworks spectacular presented by Capital Bank, and another great day of food and carnival rides. Coconut Festival wraps up Sunday, November 11 with “COCO Family Day.” Entertainment during the day includes community stage acts, a family pass and more activities.

The Cape Coral Coconut Festival is the City’s signature event, celebrating friends, family and the community. Make plans to join us this year and get ready to “GO COCO NUTS” in Cape Coral.

Thanks to Capital Bank, Fuccillo KIA of Cape Coral, Hampton Inn Suites, Bruce L. Scheiner Attorneys for the Injured, The Resort at Marina Village and LCEC for proudly sponsoring this event. For more information, visit the event website at www.CocoFest.com or call the Cape Coral Special Events Division at (239) 573-3125.