City to Close Legacy Assessments and Issue about $19 Million in Refunds

The City of Cape Coral will be closing the books on about 54,000 accounts associated with the legacy utilities assessment areas from the 1990s. The City will issue refunds of the remaining cash balance in each account to current property owners. The estimated total amount to be refunded from nine assessment areas is about $19 million.

The loans for three of the larger projects ended last year – Green Wastewater, Striped Green Wastewater and Orange Water & Wastewater. These three project areas, along with a fourth project (Orange Irrigation), represent more than 96 percent of the total balance to be refunded.

“We are preparing the appropriate final resolutions for City Council authorization to issue these refunds,” said City Manager John Szerlag. “We expect the resolutions to be presented to Council by April, and all refunds to be issued by mid-June.”

Refunds will be issued to the “current” property owner of record and not to any prior owner of the property. The current owner will receive the refund because the added value of a City utilities project stays with the property. The cost of the project is assessed on the “benefited” property and not a particular property owner. All refund amounts will include any interest earned over the period of the loans less administrative costs to issue the refunds.

These legacy assessments were the result of one of the largest utilities expansion efforts in the United States. In the 1990s, utilities construction encompassed most of the developed city areas received water, sewer and/or

2013 Citizen Survey Underway

The City of Cape Coral is conducting the biennial Citizen Survey this year. The City will use the services of the National Research Center, Inc. once again. The NRC has conducted the past five Cape Coral surveys. The NRC has created a “National Citizen Survey” that many municipalities use to acquire public opinion.

The Center is associated with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), and staff members employ scientific methods in conducting the research for the city. By using tried and true methods of data collection and analysis, the City is assured of receiving good and valid results.

About 1,200 residents will be selected randomly to participate in the mail survey. If you receive a survey from the Center, please take the time to respond to the questions. Each person who receives a survey represents more than 125 citizens, so your input is very important as we move forward with gathering opinions from the community.

Once the survey is complete and the results tabulated, the findings will be presented to City Council. The City anticipates completion of the project and a final report from the National Research Center by May.
City of Cape Coral Council Members

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City of Cape Coral Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City Manager</th>
<th>City Clerk</th>
<th>Financial Services</th>
<th>Information Technology Services</th>
<th>Public Works</th>
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<tr>
<td>John Szerlag</td>
<td>Rebecca van Deutekom</td>
<td>Victoria Bateman, Director</td>
<td>John MacLean, Director</td>
<td>Steve Neff, Director</td>
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<td>Dolores Menendez</td>
<td>Paul Dickson, Team Leader</td>
<td>Bill Van Helden, Chief</td>
<td>Steve Pohlman, Director</td>
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<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
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<td>Editor/Public Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margaret Krym</td>
<td>Dana Brunett, Director</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Connie Barron, Director</td>
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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.
Mayor’s Message

I wanted to take this opportunity to provide information on topics we will be discussing in a joint meeting between City Council and the Lee County Commission.

An agreement made on May 15th 2012 with Lee County involving Florida State Statute Chapter 164 needs to be nullified before any productive talks about the Ceitus barrier can commence. Council took the barrier off the table when we enacted Resolution 32-12. That resolution clearly states that there would be no discussion about a barrier. What we need to do is to partner with the County in a collaborative effort to deploy The Net Environmental Benefits Projects.

Cape Coral’s EMS currently is being provided by Lee County. The City of Cape Coral needs to provide its own EMS service. Right now, the residents are paying the County for EMS service, while sending our own emergency vehicles to incidents. These are the first responders. If we had our own EMS with trained personnel there would only be one piece of equipment and one team to take care of these incidents. Because of the overlap that is occurring, we are paying twice. It is also causing us to use fire trucks in the process, which adds much wear and tear to some very expensive equipment.

Lee County provides Animal Control Services, and I do not believe we are getting the service we are paying for. My own personal experience leaves a lot to be desired. Animal Control told me if I caught and leashed an animal roaming at large, they would not pick it up. That is ridiculous. It seems it would be more effective to call Animal Control and provide a pickup location for an animal, rather than send out a truck to search for the animal. Even when someone tries to assist Animal Control, they are unwilling to send a truck to get the animal and protect residents or other domestic animals walking on a leash.

The East/West Toll agreement is another issue. The agreement calls for surplus tolls to be divided on a 60/40 split with the City receiving 40%. Since the initial agreement, the City has not received any surplus cash. Lee County and the City have used surplus tolls to extend Veteran’s Parkway twice – from Santa Barbara to Chiquita ($15.6 million) in 2000, and Chiquita to Burnt Store Road ($6.8 million) in 2002. The City and County also used surplus toll revenues to build an exit ramp for the Everest area ($412,000) in 2004 and make ramp improvements at Del Prado/Veterans ($599,000) in 2005.

During my tenure, Cape Coral has had no input as to how our 40% of surplus toll money is spent. Due to economic conditions and a shortage of revenue, it becomes necessary to create another revenue stream. The best approach would be to modify our East/West toll agreement with Lee County and tap into that revenue stream. We need to renegotiate the toll agreement with the County to increase revenue without adding undue economic stress to our residents. This will provide funding for maintenance to our existing roadway system.

It is my hope that through a joint effort of the City Council and the Lee County Commission improvements can be made to both the Animal Control and EMS services along with improving the provisions of the current interlocal agreement for the City’s toll monies. All of which will provide benefits to the City of Cape Coral and its residents.

City Manager’s Message

Welcome to our spring issue of On The Move. This has been a busy first year as city manager for me as well as my staff. We have taken on several significant projects, and one of the most important is the upcoming discussion about how we can create a Cape Coral that is economically sustainable for the future and still provide a high level of service.

Our City Council has some financial challenges on their plate, and our job as City staff is to present fair and reasonable options to them. Establishing a three-year budget will be an excellent financial planning document and a step in the right direction. We also brought in an outside consultant, Burton & Associates, to build a financial model to illustrate how funding challenges and revenue options will affect City services.

Why do we need to do look at these challenges and revenue options? Cape Coral historically has relied largely on property tax revenue to fund City operations. This primary revenue source is influenced by wild swings in property values and more recently by legislative directives from Tallahassee. Many of you may not realize that even if property values increase in Cape Coral, restrictions have been placed on local governments that limit their ability to increase property tax revenues. This significantly impacts our ability to fund City operations.

Other municipalities have managed to offset these outside influences by using additional revenue sources available to them to support their General Fund operations. This includes revenues such as a fire services fee, street lighting districts and a public service tax. These revenue sources are available to Cape Coral but none have been utilized in the past. Instead, Cape Coral has balanced the budget by trying to use what now has become a declining revenue source. Annual budget balancing has been accomplished primarily by ignoring capital needs. This is not the roadmap to a sustainable and vibrant city.

The discussion we want to have with the community revolves around the question: “What kind of city do we want Cape Coral to be?” Do we want a full-service city that provides a high level of service? “Do we want “fewer services” in the city? Or do we simply want “minimal services” from our City government? The next questions are: “How much will it cost me and how will we pay for it?” The community also needs to be assured that we are good stewards of their tax dollars. This means using best practices in terms of service delivery.

Over the next few months, we will be meeting with community and neighborhood organizations to discuss the topic of economic sustainability for the City of Cape Coral. We will provide information and use the revenue model from Burton & Associates to illustrate varying levels of service delivery and costs.

If your group or organization would like to discuss this topic with us, please contact our Public Information Director Connie Barron at 574-0448 to schedule a date and time for us to come out. We can talk frankly about the City’s current financial outlook and have an exchange of ideas with you and your group.

This is one of the most important discussions we can have in partnership with the residents and all other stakeholders. We will need your input, questions and feedback as we determine our preferred future for Cape Coral.

Thank you for your time.
Army Corps and City Reach Agreement for Permitting Marine Improvements

Smalltooth sawfish concerns resulted in expiration of City’s prior permitting authority

The City of Cape Coral has reached an agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers to allow the City to regain permitting authority for marine improvements. The Local Operating Agreement gives the City approval regarding the regulation of bulkheads and backfill, aerial transmission lines, subaqueous utility and transmission lines, private single-family piers, and other minor structures associated with single-family docks and stormwater outfalls in the city.

Late last year, the Army Corps notified the City of Cape Coral that the City’s permitting authority for marine improvements would not be extended due to concerns over the presence of the smalltooth sawfish in city waterways. Representatives from the City, Lee County, the Cape Coral Construction Industry Association and the congressional offices of Sen. Marco Rubio, Sen. Bill Nelson, and former Rep. Connie Mack had been meeting with the Army Corps to extend the permit and address the Corps concerns. The decision not to extend the permit by the Army Corps surprised the parties involved who believed an extension would be granted.

Thanks to the continued work of City staff, the Army Corps and these various stakeholders (including many of Cape Coral’s local, state and federal elected officials), the permitting issue involving SAJ-91 has been resolved amicably through the Local Operating Agreement. City Council approved the agreement on February 25.

The smalltooth sawfish is classified an “endangered” species. Two critical habitats have been identified for the sawfish based on scientific research – Charlotte Harbor Estuary Unit and Ten Thousand Island/Everglades Unit. These two designated critical habitat areas cover five counties in the Gulf of Mexico in Southwest Florida. The species recovery plan focuses on habitat protection.

By taking proactive steps to address the smalltooth sawfish concerns, the City and stakeholders were able to ensure that the City’s permitting authority granted under SAJ-91 could be continued by the Army Corps.

The smalltooth sawfish is an endangered species.

Legacy ............................................................... from page 1

irrigation lines and new roads.

“It is important to point out that the City used a different project delivery method and financing plan with these older projects in the 1990s, which resulted in larger balances at the end of the loan,” added Szerlag. “We do not expect this to occur on the same level with any recently completed projects in the southwest Cape or any subsequent projects and assessments in the city.”

The following list shows the legacy areas and estimated balances to be refunded. The exact refund amount will not be finalized until the resolutions are adopted by City Council.

- Green Water & Irrigation ................. $ 238,000
- Blue Irrigation .............................. $ 120,000
- Diplomat Water ............................ $ 302,000
- Santa Barbara Water ....................... $ 44,000
- Trafalgar North Water ................. $ 40,000
- Orange Irrigation ......................... $ 3,300,000
- Striped Green Wastewater ............ $ 407,000
- Green Wastewater ...................... $ 4,990,000
- Orange Water & Wastewater ......... $ 9,800,000

Citizens Police Academy Accepting Applications for Fall Class

Ever wanted to know what it would be like to be a police officer? The Cape Coral Police Department’s Citizens Police Academy can provide citizens with a glimpse of the role of a police officer. The department is accepting applications for its next class, which begins in September.

The Citizens Police Academy is a 10-week program designed to give citizens of Cape Coral an in-depth, hands-on look at how and why the Cape Police Department does what it does. During the academy, participants learn about crime scene investigations, meet the K-9 unit, participate in mock crimes, drive a police car through the driving course, participate at the gun range, and much more.

Classes will meet Thursday evenings from 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. For more information or to sign up for the course, call the Community Outreach Program at the Cape Coral Police Department at 242-3342. Applications also are available online at www.capecops.com. Class size is limited so sign up early.
City Council Elections 2013

This year, City voters will elect Council Members for Council Districts 1, 4, and 6 as well as the Mayor’s seat. The Primary Election will be held September 10, and the General Election will be November 5. This is a non-partisan election.

The Mayor and all candidates must be continuous, full-time residents of Cape Coral for the entire calendar year preceding their qualification for office. Candidates qualifying in Districts 1, 4, and 6 must reside in their respective districts. The terms of office for the Mayor and Council are four years. All terms begin the first regular Council meeting after the General Election.

A candidate may announce his/her candidacy at any time; however, pursuant to the Campaign Financing Laws of Florida, F.S. 106.1, before accepting any contribution, or making any expenditure, the “Appointment of Campaign Treasurer” and “Designation of Campaign Depository” forms must be filed with the City Clerk’s Office to open a campaign file. A candidate may open his/her campaign file with the City Clerk’s Office any time prior to the qualifying period; however, certain documents pertaining to a candidate’s campaign only can be finalized and submitted to a candidate’s file during the qualifying period.

Official qualifying for potential candidates begins Monday, July 1 at 7:30 a.m. through Friday, July 5 at 1 p.m. During the qualifying period, candidates can pay the required fees and complete all necessary paperwork in the City Clerk’s Office. The total fee to run for the office of Mayor is $365.23, which includes the filing fee of $150 plus the Election Assessment fee of 1 percent of the annual salary of $21,523.40 ($215.23). The total fee to run for the office of Council Member is $282.95, which includes the filing fee of $100 plus the Election Assessment fee of 1 percent of the annual salary of $18,294.89 ($182.95). A Financial Disclosure Form must be completed and a valid voter registration card must be provided.

Only persons designated as treasurer or deputy treasurer may sign campaign account checks. A candidate may act as his/her own treasurer or deputy treasurer. Up to three deputy treasurers may be appointed to sign checks in the treasurer’s absence. The Appointment of Campaign Treasurer and Designation of Campaign Depository forms can be found on the City website (www.capecoral.net).

For more information about qualifying, please contact the City Clerk’s office at (239) 574-0417.

Cape Coral Remains One of Florida’s Safest Cities

Cape Coral continues to be one of the safest cities in Florida based on the 2012 Uniform Crime Report. Cape Coral showed an overall decrease in Part I crimes of 11 percent. Part I crimes include robbery, burglary, larceny, aggravated assault, etc. Part II crimes (simple battery and arson) decreased by 9 percent, while domestic-related crimes dropped by 10 percent.

Robbery showed the largest reduction in Part I crimes with a 26 percent reduction. Burglary decreased by 16 percent, while larceny dropped 11 percent.

“We are proud of the hard work of the men and women of the Cape Coral Police Department, both sworn and civilian, who help keep this community safe,” said Police Chief Jay Murphy. “We are successful due in large part to the strong partnership we enjoy with our citizens. Without this teamwork, we would not benefit from a case clearance rate better than the national average.”

CRA Board Approves Transition Going Smoothly

Most operations absorbed by existing City staff

The City’s Economic Development Office has received some questions regarding the Community Redevelopment Area in downtown Cape Coral. Most of the questions have centered on the misconception that some or part of the CRA has ceased to function; however, the “South Cape CRA” is alive and well, and moving forward.

Much of the confusion probably exists because of recent operational changes made to ensure the financial sustainability of the South Cape CRA. The City Council now sits as the CRA Board of Commissioners, and all chartered functions of the organization remain in place and are staffed through a collaborative effort of key staff within the City’s departments (City Manager’s Office, Public Works, Economic Development, Community Development, Parks, Finance).

One of the recent changes is that the CRA office has moved and is now located at 4816 Chester Street in the new Community Resource Center. The phone number has not changed and staff can be contacted by calling (239) 549-5615.

The goal of the South Cape CRA is to encourage and fund future capital improvement projects and leverage private developments to create a vibrant, walkable downtown area. The recent announcement by Ford’s Garage that they will be taking over the old Leapin’ Lizard’s and establishing a new restaurant is a prime example of the type of private investment the CRA is seeking.

Without a doubt, changes bring questions and concerns; however, the South Cape CRA will continue to operate and develop into the future destination envisioned for the citizens of Cape Coral.
Partial List of City Services Provided with Your Tax Dollar

POLICE
- Communications/Logistics
  911 calls for Police and Fire
  Public records/Police reports
- Patrol
  Emergency calls
  Parks security
  Minor dispute resolutions
  Community presentations
  Weekend Juvenile Arbitration
    (Community Service for Kids)
  Neighborhood Watch meetings
  Residential/Commercial security surveys
- Investigations
  Major crimes (homicide/robbery)
  Child abuse/Sexual abuse
  Burglary/Theft
  White collar crime
  Narcotics/Vice
  Task forces (U.S. Marshal, DEA, FBI, Secret Service
- Special Operations
  Traffic, DUI, Traffic Homicide
  K9
  Marine patrol
  Police Volunteer Unit
  Vacation house checks
  Fingerprinting (public)
  SWAT (entry team, snipers, negotiation)
- Professional Standards
  Internal Affairs
  Personnel/Training
  Police accreditation (state and national)
  Public Affairs
  “Do the Right Thing”
    Citizens Police Academy
  Victim Assistance

FIRE
- Administration
  Incident Management Teams
  Standard Operating Guides
  Citizens Fire Academy
- Emergency Management
  Emergency Planning
  CodeRed
  Community Emergency Response Team
- Operations
  Fire Suppression
  Emergency Medical Services
  Task Forces/Mutual Aid
  Confined Space/Trench Rescue
  Dive Rescue
  Marine Operations
  Hazardous Materials
  Basic/Advanced Life Support
  Dogs in canals
  Missing person
- Life Safety
  Fire Prevention
  Fire Inspections/Investigations
  Public Education/Outreach
- Support Services
  Apparatus and Equipment Maintenance

Facility Maintenance
CPR Initiative
Training (mandatory/advanced/specialized)
Research and Development

ADMINISTRATION
Broadcast meetings on Channel 98
Council candidate debates
“On The Move” newsletter
Citizen’s Survey
Social media information outlets
Video stream for iPads/iPhones
City of Cape Coral website
Citizen Online Support Center
(2,500 Q&As)
South Cape CRA support
Media support
Economic development incentives/plans
Business retention

CITY CLERK
Record public meetings/minutes
Citizen Action Center
Retain thousands of public records
Public records requests (7,672)
Manage switchboard (38,062 calls)
Passport services

PARKS & RECREATION
- Parks Maintenance
  Maintain 32 City parks
- Marine Services
  Boat launch and marinas
  ChiQuita Boat Dock operations
  Boat slip/Transient slips
- Recreation & Social Services Division
  Preschool & Voluntary Pre-K
  Childhood Music Instruction
  Ballet and Creative Dance
  Horsemanship/Young Equestrian
  Child/Babysitting Safety Programs
  Adult/Senior Fitness Programs
  Adult Foreign Language Programs
  Mini-Bus Transportation
  Group Road Trips
  Recycling Program
  Mother/Son, Daddy/Daughter Dance
  Fishing Instruction/Angler Education
  Marine/ Specialty Programs
  Aquatic Fitness
  Summer Camps
  Pavilion and Park Rentals
  Before/After School Programs
  Skateboarding
  Fine Arts/Arts Exhibits
  Glass/Jewelry Lab/Instruction
  Clay/Pottery Lab/Instruction
  Photography Instruction
  Stone Sculpture Instruction
  Drawing and Sketching Instruction
  Special Populations Programs

Financial Services Dept.
- Accounting/Procurement
  Payroll support
  Collect/Invest revenues
  Manage banking services
  Process payments for goods/services
  Compliance with state/federal laws
  Record transactions/track assets
  Annual CAFR requirement
  City Manager’s Proposed Budget
  Manage 40 contracts for services
  Process 4,500 purchase orders

Risk Management
Self insurance programs
Investigate claims made against the City
Property/Flood Insurance for City
Recovers funds for property damage

Evaluate potential financial risks

Real Estate
Acquire properties/easements
Maintain inventory of City property
Assist citizens with real estate questions

DCD
- Planning Division
  Current and long-range planning services
  State/Federal grants
  Zoning services
  Review project plans and need
  Issue Certificates of Use
  Issue sign permits
  FEMA Flood Insurance (25%
    reduction in premium)
  Federal housing grant funds
- Code Enforcement Division
  Process code complaints (32,000/yr.)
  Enforce contractor licensing
  Issue business tax receipts
  Enforce watering restrictions
  “Take Pride in the Cape” program
  Inspect/Enforce landscaping standards
  Foreclosure/Rental property registration
  Board up foreclosures
  Remove graffiti/Clean trash
  Mow abandoned, developed properties
  Outreach programs
  Special Magistrate hearings
  Issue citations/code case prep
  Contractor Regulatory Board meetings

PUBLIC WORKS
- Transportation
  Maintain City vehicles/equipment
  Power 14,000 streetlights/43 traffic signals
  Maintain 1,200 miles of roadways
  Mowing all medians
  Trim trees in public right of way
  Pick up trash along roadways
  Adopt-A-Road program
  Spray weeds sidewalks/concrete
  Maintain 158 bridges
  Maintain 186 miles of sidewalks
  Maintain 53,000 traffic signs
  Maintain road striping
  Repair road shoulders/patch potholes
  Hurricane/tropical storm clean up
  Maintain median landscaping

City Facilities Maintenance
- Security access for all City facilities
  400 City building AC units
  Building electrical service/equipment
  1 million square feet of roofing
  100 drinking fountains, ice machines
  and Freezer units
  500 streetlights and parking lot lights
  All athletic field lighting
  Landscape for City Hall complex
  ChiQuita Lock
  Fire alarms for all City facilities
  City of Cape Coral Charter schools
What Do You Get for Your Tax Dollar?

When it comes to property taxes, the simple and popular response from citizens is that property taxes are “too high.” This public sentiment usually is expressed without taking any inventory of the many services received from local government for those tax dollars.

The services listed on the opposite facing page are some of the myriad of services Cape Coral citizens receive for the property taxes they pay to the City. This list is not exhaustive; there are many other services not included. But this list gives citizens better insight into what City departments are able to do with their portion of each City tax dollar as illustrated below.

- **Administrative:** 13 cents
- **Organizational Support:** 9 cents
- **Community Development:** 2 cents
- **Parks & Recreation:** 8 cents
- **Public Works:** 7 cents
- **Fire/Emergency Services:** 28 cents
- **Police:** 33 cents

### Average Taxable Value Single Family $93,057

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<th>FUNCTION</th>
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<td>Fire/Emergency Services</td>
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How Does the Cost for Cape Coral Services Compare to Other Residential Costs?

As the list on the opposite page shows, homeowners receive many City services in return for their tax dollars. But how does this compare to monthly costs for other residential services that most Cape Coral residents must pay?

The average homeowner pays an average of $62 a month for City of Cape Coral services. Here is a list of other common residential services and the average monthly cost for each service. Based on these costs, the City of Cape Coral provides a very good service value to its citizens.

- **Average Cost High Speed Cable Internet:** $ 56 month
- **Average Cost for Cape Coral City Services:** $ 62 month
- **Cost for One Tank of Gas (Sedan):** $ 72 per tank
- **Average Cell Phone Bill (one person):** $ 73 month
- **Average Cost for Public Schools:** $ 75 month
- **Average Cost Lawn Care Service (mowing):** $ 80 month
- **Average Digital Cable Bill:** $ 85 month
- **Average Satellite TV Bill:** $ 85 month
- **Average Water/Sewer Bill:** $ 85 month
- **Average Cost Car Insurance:** $ 88 month
- **Average Electric Bill:** $137 month
- **Average Cost of Homeowner’s Insurance:** $141 month

Cape Coral Works on Developing a 3-Year Budget

Multi-year budget can set City on path toward financial sustainability

City Manager John Szerlag is leading the effort to develop a 3-year budget as one of the critical steps to achieving City Council’s strategic objective of “Financial Sustainability.” The City’s budget staff is working on the plan for presentation to Council during this year’s budget discussion.

“By having a 3-year budget, we can establish the future financial direction for Cape Coral rather than being focused only on a one-year budget cycle,” said City Manager John Szerlag.

In accordance with the guidelines of Florida Statutes, only the first year of the 3-year budget can be adopted. However, the City Council and City staff will use the 3-year budget to make financial decisions that will have multi-year impacts.

The 3-year budget will be released in late March/early April along with the results of the Economic Sustainability/Revenue Diversification Study of the General Fund that is being prepared by Burton & Associates.
Residents Reminded to Follow Watering Schedule

Conservation is necessary to ensure limited watering supplies last until the rainy season arrives

Cape Coral is entering the heart of the dry season, which means it is imperative that our residents strictly adhere to the watering schedule. The City has a limited supply of irrigation water, and proper conservation is necessary to avoid the possibility of tighter restrictions.

A two-day irrigation schedule is in place year-round for watering lawns in Cape Coral. Residents who use their private 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

For non-residential and multi-family watering times, visit the City website at www.capecoral.net.

City Secures State Funds for Southwest 6 & 7 Utilities Project

The City has been notified by the State of Florida that the Southwest 6 & 7 utilities extension project is eligible for low-interest loans from the State Revolving Fund program. The SRF loans will total about $90 million, which will fund the construction costs associated with the project. This includes about $74 million for wastewater and $16 million for water. (NOTE: The $90 million does not include more than $10 million of costs previously incurred during the project’s prior planning process.)

The interest rate associated with the SRF loans will be in the 2 percent range; however, the Southwest 6 & 7 costs incurred prior to the suspension of the project in 2009 also must be included in an assessment. These prior costs will be financed through a bank loan, which will carry a higher rate. This probably will result in a higher blended interest rate for property owners in Southwest 6 & 7 who choose finance their assessments. Even with the bank loan, the interest costs for Southwest 6 & 7 property owners will be lower than prior projects.

The City has started the process to pre-qualify contractors to bid on the seven contract areas within Southwest 6 & 7. Working with outside legal and auditing construction experts, the City has established the required professional specifications and issued a Request for Qualifications. By establishing professional requirements for contractors to meet, the City will ensure that only the best utilities construction companies are working in Cape Coral. The final list of qualified contractors should be completed sometime in March, and project bidding could begin in May.

The assessment methodology and the assessment rolls still must be finalized, and property owners in Southwest 6 & 7 will receive their notices via mail prior to final public hearings.

City Issues Land Scam Warning for North Cape Property Owners

Property owners in the north Cape are advised to disregard “scare” notices from land scammers offering to purchase their property to avoid paying water and sewer assessments. A recent postcard solicitation from a local land buyer warns of $20,000 assessments that must be paid or property owners will lose their land “starting in four months.” The solicitor then offers to purchase properties for $500 cash with no closing costs but the offer is only good through a specific date.

There is no truth to the claim that property owners in the north Cape will be required to start paying assessments in four months or lose their property. Only the Southwest 6 & 7 project is moving forward at this time. Annual assessment payments may not begin for these property owners until the project is complete. North 1 and North 2 also are on the board for utilities; however, these projects will not begin until 2015 (North 2) and 2017 (North 1). Assessments also may not be due until these projects are complete.

“This is an attempt to acquire property from Cape Coral landowners using deceitful tactics, and we will not sit by and allow our property owners to be unwittingly duped into giving up their properties for pennies based on false information,” said Connie Barron, Public Information Director for the City. “We encourage anyone who receives a solicitation like this to call our Citizen’s Action Center at 574-0425 for accurate information.”

Adjust Sprinkler Timers for Time Change on March 10

Residents are reminded to check the timers for their sprinklers and adjust accordingly for the time change associated with Daylight Savings Time. On March 10, the clocks “spring forward” one hour. While the City provides a grace period to allow residents to adjust their timers and avoid a citation, that grace period does expire after 30 days.

If you have neighbors who are "snowbirds" and heading back north for the summer, please remind them to change their timers before they leave. Also, our part-time residents are encouraged to make arrangements with a neighbor or their lawn care company to reset their timers should more-restrictive watering schedules be imposed. We do not want any of our residents receiving citations, and planning ahead for the dry season before leaving town will help avoid those costly tickets.
Fire Chief Bill Van Helden Retires

It was an emotional day on February 5, 2013 as the Fire Department, City personnel, and local partners said their farewells to Bill Van Helden, Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director. Bill accepted a position with Charlotte County Emergency Management.

Bill retired from the Cape Coral Fire Department after serving the community for 16 years. His top concern was always the safety of his personnel as well as the life and property of the public. His compassion for others was immeasurable. Many friends, family and coworkers remember the countless times during when he offered words of hope and encouragement to someone in despair or spent time at the hospital with a fellow employee or friend.

As Cape Coral’s Fire Chief, Bill was responsible for the direction of all fire administration, firefighting, fire prevention, fiscal oversight, and long-range planning. In his capacity as Emergency Management Director, he coordinated the Emergency Management Program.

Bill spearheaded the development of the Cape Coral Emergency Operations Center (EOC). He developed and implemented many programs that benefited the citizens of Cape Coral including the City’s Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and the Disaster Recovery Plan. Both of these plans were invaluable during Hurricanes Charley and Wilma. He also implemented the Vial of L.I.F.E. project, which made medical information immediately available in a home for first responders.

Bill established the CodeRed emergency messaging system alerting citizens of emergencies, hurricanes, boil water notices, missing persons, etc. He also expanded the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to include emergency management volunteers who provide numerous volunteer hours throughout the city.

During Bill’s tenure, the City added three fire stations to support the rapid growth of the city, replaced four, aging stations, and upgraded existing stations. He was instrumental in reducing the Insurance Service Office (ISO) ratings, which helped to reduce homeowner’s insurance premiums.

To improve the chance of patient survivability, Bill increased the number of paramedics within the department and implemented Advanced Life Support (ALS) non-transport units to provide advanced life support care under the direction of the medical director. In addition, he implemented the Community CPR Program (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) to provide CPR and emergency awareness training to citizens and City employees.

The members of his department adapted and responded to some of the greatest challenges the fire service has faced. The City saw service demand increase from the unprecedented growth in the mid-2000s, followed by being at the epicenter of the housing foreclosure crisis in America. Cape Coral experienced the threats of Anthrax and the H1N1 Pandemic, and was impacted by several hurricanes.

While the department expanded to meet the challenges of growth in a pre-platted community, it was insufficient to maintain the increased demands for services. The downfall in the housing market forced extensive budget reductions over the last three years. Consequently, response times increased beyond industry standards.

As many endured the uncertainty of the City’s leadership and economic hardships, Bill must be commended for his relentless devotion to public service as he was the instrumental force in shaping Cape Coral Fire, Rescue and Emergency Management Services.

We thank Chief Bill Van Helden for his years of dedicated service to our community and wish him much success in his future endeavors. Bill will continue to live in North Fort Myers with his wife, Becky, and their four sons.

Parents of Pennsylvania Officer Killed in the Line of Duty Donate K9 to CCPD

The Parents of a Pennsylvania police officer who was killed in the line of duty have donated a Police K9 to the Cape Coral Police Department. The ceremonial presentation of K9 “Nate” was held at the City Council meeting on February 11.

Nathan Burnfield was a police officer for the South Strabane Township, Pennsylvania Police Department. Tragically, Nathan was killed in the line of duty on November 4, 2008. Nathan’s parents, Cape Coral residents Rick and Debbie Burnfield said their son aspired to become a K9 Officer but died before he could reach his goal.

In April 2011, Rick and Debbie contacted Sgt. Dave McConnell of the Cape Coral Police Department about doing something for Cape Coral Police K9 Unit on behalf of their son. Sgt McConnell supervises the department’s K9 Unit and has been a Police K9 handler and trainer for more than 25 years.

The Burnfields donated two ballistic vests to the Cape Coral Police Department’s K9 Unit. This generous gesture ensured that all six of Cape Coral’s K9s had the protection they needed to perform their duties safely.

The Burnfields and the Cape Coral Police Department continued to share a strong bond. The Burnfields recently contacted the department and expressed their desire to donate a new Police K9 to the department and name him “Nate” in honor of their son.

“Officer Burnfield made the ultimate sacrifice for his community, and this tragedy brought Debbie and Rick into the Cape Coral Police Department family two years ago,” said Lt. Tony Sizemore. “We are so thankful for their continued generosity and we are proud to honor Nathan in this way. The Burnfields will forever be part of the Cape Coral Police Department family.”
Six Major Road Segments to be Resurfaced

With more than 1,200 miles of residential roads and 160 miles of major roads, the city’s road transportation system is one of our most valuable capital assets. The Public Works staff works each year to maintain this valuable asset but with limited funding, it is a daunting task.

Using generally accepted guidelines for maintaining roadways, the city’s two-lane residential streets have an estimated lifespan of 20 – 24 years. Multi-lane roads have a 10 – 12 year lifespan. To properly maintain the roadways in Cape Coral, the City needs $6.5 million each year, and the City currently only has about $1 million. Unfortunately, within these limited financial resources for road resurfacing, the City of Cape Coral continues to fall short on what can be paved from year to year.

Through Council directives and staff recommendations, the following priorities are established to determine sequential paving purposes. First priority is major roadways with high traffic volumes. Second priority is residential streets with all utilities in place and high population and traffic density. Third priority is residential streets with sparse population and light traffic.

With limited funding available, City staff anticipates paving only a few sections of the major roads considered to be in poor condition and in need of repair.

The City’s Transportation Advisory Commission and the City Council approved a contract to allow the Public Works Department to pave the following major roads for FY 2012/2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Road</th>
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<th>To</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jacaranda Pkwy</td>
<td>Andalusia Blvd.</td>
<td>Santa Barbara Blvd.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kismet Pkwy.</td>
<td>Santa Barbara Blvd.</td>
<td>Nelson Rd.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academy Blvd.</td>
<td>SE 32 St.</td>
<td>SE 26 St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornwallis Pkwy.</td>
<td>Del Prado Blvd.</td>
<td>SE 22 Pl.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palm Tree Blvd.</td>
<td>SE 37th St.</td>
<td>SE 47th St.</td>
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Staff is considering ideas to create a funding source in accordance with Council’s strategic plan for sustainability for future road paving projects. The City also is looking for ways to extend the life cycle of the roadway. This includes spot paving those areas in need of immediate attention or using pavement preservation to extend the life cycle of asphalt. A Pavement Management System that would use digital equipment to determine road condition, update the current database for more effective tracking and improved allocation of paving dollars also is being evaluated.

Spring Break Fun with Parks & Recreation

When Lee County Schools let out for the annual Spring Break from March 23 – 31, there will not be a shortage of fun in Cape Coral. The Parks & Recreation Department is offering several activities for children of all ages to keep them engaged and entertained during the break including:

- **Sun Splash Family Waterpark** (All ages)
  - March 23 – 31
  - Open Daily 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
  - Admission prices available at www.SunSplashWaterpark.com

- **Spring Break Skate Camp at Eagle Skate Park** (5-14 yrs)
  - March 25 – 29
  - Hours: 7 a.m. – 6 p.m.
  - Participants will learn skateboarding skills & play skateboarding games

- **Youth Services’ Spring Break Camp at Oasis Elementary** (5-14 yrs)
  - March 25 – 29
  - Hours: 6:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.
  - Includes field trips, guest speakers, arts & crafts plus indoor and outdoor activities

- **Four Freedoms Park’s Spring Break Horse Camp** (5-16 yrs)
  - March 25 – 29
  - Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
  - Held at Saddlewood Horse Club, this popular camp includes riding English, Western and bareback, games and more

- **Spring Safari Camp at the Yacht Club** (7-10 yrs)
  - March 25 – 29
  - Hours: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
  - Includes fishing, swimming, sporting events, arts & crafts, field trips and a pizza and ice cream party at the end of the week

- **Spring Break Nature Camp at Rotary Park** (7-13 yrs)
  - March 25 – 29
  - Hours: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
  - Children will explore the nature park and participate in fun activities as they learn about the various plants, bugs and creatures

For more information on any of these activities, visit www.CapeParks.com or call the facility of your choice. Keep in mind that there is limited space available for the different camps so be sure to reserve your child’s spot early. Parks & Recreation phone numbers as well as a preview of the upcoming Summer Camps can be found in the special Parks & Recreation insert located in the center spread of this newsletter.
Water Line Insurance is a Personal Choice
Residents receive solicitations from companies offering to insure water lines

The City of Cape Coral occasionally receives calls from our utility customers concerned about a solicitation received in the mail offering insurance coverage for the customer’s water service line. Customers want to know if this is a legitimate solicitation or a scam.

The City recently was made aware of a solicitation from a company with the name of “HomeServe.” The opening paragraph from the mailing reads: “Your property at XXX NE 12th Ct. has appeared in our review of Cape Coral and we have found that your exterior water line is not covered with Water Service Line Coverage from HomeServe.”

The solicitation goes on to say that the underground water line could fail without warning and cost the customer thousands of dollars to repair. They offer an insurance policy that provides coverage of $3,500 per call/$7,000 annual benefit (2 calls) for a monthly rate of $4.99. Please note the use of the word “underground.” This insurance applies only to the underground water line extending from the water meter to the home and not any water piping within the home.

So, is this insurance necessary? Let’s look at who is responsible for repairing a damaged water line.

The City is responsible for repairing any water main break that occurs with the line feeding to the customer’s water meter. The customer is responsible for repairing any water line break that occurs in the line extending from the water meter to the home.

Is it worth $4.99 a month to have this insurance on the chance that the water line falling under the customer’s responsibility to repair might break? This is not a decision the City can make for our customers since buying insurance is a personal choice.

Why do people buy insurance? People buy insurance as a way of transferring risk from themselves to an insurance company. Instead of retaining the risk of loss, people pay an insurance company a set amount of money (premium) to accept the risk and pay the loss. It is at the discretion of our customers to determine if the insurance being offered is an acceptable option for them.

City Welcomes New “Take Pride in the Cape” Coordinator

The “Take Pride in the Cape” volunteer group is back! In 2012, the group marked a milestone by cleaning their 1,000th property. Unfortunately, the milestone also signaled the retirement of their leader, Ray Nicholson and several volunteers.

The good news is that during the holidays, the volunteers regrouped, and a new leader stepped up to the plate. Another former City employee, Chuck Stanton, is now the group’s leader and “Take Pride” is back cleaning up properties. Their first property under their new leadership was completed on Saturday, February 9.

This group of volunteers always can use more members. If you have questions or want to volunteer, please call Code Compliance at 574-0613.

Code Officer Goes Extra Mile to Help Victim of Unlicensed Contractor

Code Enforcement Officer Paul Gates handles contractor licensing and unlicensed contractor work. Here is an excerpt from an email received from a victim of unlicensed contracting. [Note: The author asked that we remove his name.]

“My wife and I purchased a home in Cape Coral in Dec 2011. We hired [Contractor] to do substantial work to the home. By May 2012, [Contractor] had not finished the work but promised to do so promptly. He asked us to pay in full before we went back to Canada. When we returned to Cape Coral in November 2012, we were shocked to see numerous items not completed.

I contacted the city and spoke to Mr. Gates…Mr. Gates listened to my story and then informed me that no permits were taken out...Not only had [Contractor] not finished his work, the work he claimed to have finished was not done properly at all. Some of it was dangerous (fire hazard) with live exposed electrical wires.

Mr. Gates realized our situation…He was relentless in his pursuit to make our situation better. He aggressively went after [Contractor] and deflected all contact with him away from us to help me.

And he got results. Today, we got paid by [Contractor] 100% of the funds required to repair his work. All this is now done to proper codes.”

The amount repaid to the victim was $11,516. The contractor also faced the Contractor’s Regulatory Board for disciplinary action, and the information has been forwarded to the State for additional action. This case illustrates the costs, hazards and dangers of unlicensed and unpermitted work. This particular case also illustrates the drive and passion of Officer Gates. We appreciate his efforts and encourage all residents to make sure they use licensed, bonded contractors.
Code Corner – Unlicensed Contractors

Unlicensed contracting is a serious concern in Cape Coral. Work performed by unlicensed contractors directly affects the safety and welfare of our community through scams, and unpermitted and shoddy work that may present hazards. Unlicensed contractors may be individuals with criminal records, and they are entering a home unchecked.

By the time a victim finishes repairing the work done by the unlicensed contractor, they pay three times what it would have cost to use a licensed contractor.

Our Cape Coral economy is based heavily on construction. Unlicensed contracting activity has been an issue for the past several years. To combat this problem and provide assistance to our citizens, the Code Compliance Division has the following actions in place:

- Two Code Enforcement officers are assigned fulltime to unlicensed contracting and licensing violations.
- All officers are on proactive patrol, keeping an eye out for unlicensed activity as part of their daily routine patrols.
- Code works closely with the Building Department to monitor permits, unpermitted work and “Owner-Builder” permits.
- Code Compliance works with the CCCIA and other building and contractor associations to network, obtain and distribute information, pool resources for better enforcement, and encourage additional “eyes and ears” throughout the city.
- Code works with Law Enforcement and State Departments on a regular basis conducting investigations and “sting” activities.
- Code officers routinely monitor Craig’s List, Angie’s List and other advertising outlets searching for possible unlicensed workers.
- Violators are cited directly into Lee County Courts where the City seeks maximum fines and penalties.

- Code officers respond within 15 minutes to any complaint of a “work in progress” involving unlicensed or unpermitted work.
- Code officers work weekends and extended hours.
- Code Compliance continuously asks the consumer to hire licensed contractors and call Code to verify licensing.

While Code Compliance has these actions in place to address unlicensed contractors, the consumer also needs to take responsibility. Remember these tips:

- If the proposal seems too good to be true, it probably is. Ask questions and make phone calls.
- Always get more than one estimate.
- Be wary of “door-to-door” contractors.
- Always ask to see the contractor’s license number. Licensed contractors are proud of their number and will gladly show it. State law also requires the license number to be displayed.
- If a contractor asks for full payment upfront, get another contractor.
- If you have questions, please call Licensing at 574-0430 or Code Compliance at 574-0613.

2012 Unlicensed Contractor Stats

- Sites Checked . . . . . 806
- Written Warnings . . . . 129
- Verbal Warnings . . . 26
- Citations . . . . 82
- Stop Work Orders . . . . 68
- Admin Fees . . . . $24,577
- Fines . . . . . . . . . $33,795
- Warrants . . . . . 2

Sun Splash Family Waterpark Reopens on March 9

One of Southwest Florida’s most popular fun spots will open on March 9 as Sun Splash Family Waterpark kicks off the 2013 season.

Spring operating hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends; however, the waterpark will be open daily during Spring Break from March 23 – 31. When schools close for summer vacation in late-May, Sun Splash will be open daily (weather permitting) from May 24 – August 7.

Early Bird Passes Available

Sun Splash is offering the affordable “Early Bird” season pass special for a limited time. The pass allows local residents to take advantage of Sun Splash throughout the summer months. “Early Bird” season passes, which are on sale through April 7, range from $54 – $64 for Cape Coral residents to $69 – $79 for non-residents. This provides a savings of $20 per person from the regular season pass prices. Sun Splash season pass holders receive a number of benefits including unlimited park admission during regular operating hours plus discounts on food, merchandise, parking, and guest tickets.

The 2013 season also brings the return of Sun Splash’s popular “Aqua Theatre Nights,” which will be held the fourth Friday each month from May through July. “Family Fun Nights” will be the second Saturday each month from June through August.

Sun Splash has a full program with swimming lessons, Junior Lifeguard and Splash-ca-teer day camps, and free water safety awareness clinics. Check the Sun Splash website or summer program guide for complete details.

If you are looking for a fun place to host your next birthday party or group outing, check out the affordable birthday party packages and group rates with catering options available to best meet your needs. For more details and to check availability, call Sun Splash Group Sales at (239) 574-0495 or email SunSplashGroupSales@CapeCoral.net. Be sure to book early to get the date of your choice.

For more information on Sun Splash, visit www.SunSplashWaterpark.com or call (239) 574-0558.

Sun Splash is on Facebook and Twitter! Become a fan on Facebook and/or follow us on Twitter for the latest park news and special offers!
Sirenia Vista Park Gets a Facelift

Sirenia Vista Park is an environmental park located at 3916 Geitus Parkway in northwest Cape Coral. The park provides a great spot to fish, observe manatees in the Bows Canal during the cool months, or take a kayak to observe nature and access the Caloosa Blueway through Matlacha. This park has undergone several improvements the past year and more are in the works.

The City completed a new ADA-accessible fishing area last summer. This enhancement included a concrete pathway with railings and landscape to the fishing pad. Railings also were installed around the concrete pad for safety.

An observation deck is under construction at the north end of the Bows Canal where manatees can be viewed during the cooler months. ADA access to the new deck is expected to be in place soon.

A shoreline stabilization project is being funded by a Lee County Tourist Development Council grant in the amount of $191,721. The project will stabilize shoreline around the southern peninsula-shaped area of the park. This project includes identifying and removing the non-native vegetation while maintaining all native species. In addition, rip-rap will be placed along the west side and south end of the property to slow and prevent erosion along the park’s shoreline.

Two additional projects have not yet been funded. An elevated boardwalk is planned to run parallel with the Bows Canal on the west side, then along the south end of the property. The boardwalk will rise to a maximum height of 30 feet. Observation areas will be included along the boardwalk for viewing manatees in the Bows Canal and viewing the preserve to the west of the park.

The City also wants to add a Manatee Educational Center for visitors to learn about manatees and other environmental elements. Classes, literature, photographs, etc. will be displayed and distributed within the building. A kayak storage facility will be included or constructed next to this building. As previously mentioned, funding has not been secured for these two projects.

New Options Offered for Boat Trailer Parking

The City’s Boat Trailer Parking Program will be changing on March 1. The current parking program at the City’s five boat ramps requires boaters to pay a $10 daily fee to park their boat trailers while out on the water. Cape residents also have the option of purchasing an annual pass for $50. Residents were required to pre-purchase the annual parking decal to avoid paying the daily parking fee.

With the change, if a Cape Coral resident decides to purchase an annual decal within 72 hours of paying a $10 daily parking fee, the resident can present the “Pay and Park” electronic receipt from Rosen Park, Horton Park or the Yacht Club and get a $10 discount on the purchase of the annual decal. In addition, the residential program is being extended to include a discount for registering additional tow vehicles.

Annual parking decals are available only for Cape Coral residents and Cape Coral businesses. The decal can be purchased at the Parks and Recreation counter in City Hall (1015 Cultural Park Boulevard), at the Harbormaster’s Office within the Yacht Club Community Park or at the front counter of the Cape Coral Yacht Club. The City accepts cash, check or credit card. Be sure to bring a valid driver’s license, vehicle registration, boat registration and proof of Cape Coral residency (i.e. local utility bill).

Annual parking passes are valid for unlimited parking at the City’s five developed boat ramps for one year from the date of purchase. Visit the Marine Services section of the website at www.CapeParks.com to view a map of all ramp locations. For more information about the Boat Trailer Parking program or for boater assistance, contact the Harbormaster’s Office at (239) 574-0809 or Cape Coral Parks & Recreation Administration at (239) 573-3128.
Coral Oaks Golf Course

Coral Oaks Golf Course is one the best golf courses in Southwest Florida. The City’s course has established itself as a premier course in the golfing community by offering a wide variety of playing and instructional programs as well as the most competitive greens fee and membership pricing in the area.

In addition to daily play, Coral Oaks offers golf instructional programs in Cape Coral including weekly adult clinics, five-session golf schools, individual personalized lessons and free Junior Golf Clinics. Our PGA Professional staff has more than 75 years of combined experience – the most in the area. Our instructors can help make your golf game and golfing experience more enjoyable. Just call and book your next private lesson, golf school or clinic and get on the road to a better golf game.

If you are looking for a great place to host your next golf outing and/or like to participate in special events, Coral Oaks is currently scheduled to host seven charity golf outings from March through May. These outings include a “For the Kids” benefit for the Children’s Cancer Foundation, a tournament for the Mariner High School Boosters and the Cape Coral Construction Industry Association Hall of Fame Tournament. These organizations are always looking for extra players so contact Coral Oaks by email, through Facebook or by phone and we’ll get you the details and set you up to play in one or all of these events. If you would like to plan your own golf outing, Coral Oaks accommodates groups of 20-140 players and the course offers some great rates – particularly in the summer months when you book your event early.

If you like to play on a more regular basis, Coral Oaks offers Men’s and Ladies’ Golf Associations for fun, social and competitive golfing experiences. The course also offers annual and 9-month golf memberships.

If you have interest in any golfing programs, golf outings, group bookings or would like to hold a banquet or party at the most competitive pricing in the Southwest Florida area, give us a call at (239) 573-3100. You can find check our website at www.CoralOaksGolf.com and find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CoralOaksGolfCourse.

Book tee times online up to five days in advance: www.CoralOaksGolf.com. Remember “Every Day is a Great Day at Coral Oaks,” and we look forward to seeing you soon.

City of Cape Coral Holiday Season Blood Drive Collects 50 Units of Blood

Next drive is April 19, and public invited to stop by and give “the gift of life.”

City of Cape Coral employees and citizens combined to give 50 units of blood at their Holiday Season Blood Drive on December 19 at City Hall. This was the most successful blood drive held at City Hall. Donors included 49 City employees and 13 citizens who stopped by the Lee Memorial Bloodmobile to participate. An internal department challenge resulted in the City’s Human Resources Department taking the honor of highest percentage of staff participating with 25 percent. The City’s Financial Services Department was 2nd with 18 percent participation.

The City of Cape Coral will be hosting another blood drive on Wednesday, April 17 from 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. The Lee Memorial “Bloodmobile” will be parked a City Hall, and the City is encouraging not only City employees but Cape Coral residents to come by and donate much-needed blood to help our local hospitals.

If you have questions about donating blood, please call 343-2333.

Cape Coral’s “Relay For Life” Event is April 27–28

This year is the 100th birthday of the American Cancer Society – 100 years of working to find the cures, ease the suffering and support the survivors of cancer. Relay For Life is the signature fundraising event of the American Cancer Society with thousands of “relays” held each year worldwide.

Cape Coral is celebrating 11 years of raising awareness through the Relay For Life. The first event held in 2002, chaired by Gloria Tate and Cheryl Leftwich. With continued participation every year, the Cape Coral “Relay For Life” has raised almost $2 million since 2002, and last year’s event raised more than $118,000.

This year, the event will be at the Mariner High School track on Chiquita Boulevard. The relay starts at 3 p.m. on Saturday and continues until 8 a.m. Sunday. Highlights are the Survivor Victory Celebration at 3 p.m. and Luminaria Ceremony at 9 p.m. Saturday. The City’s own Lisa DePatie is one of the members of the local Planning Committee. Lisa has been supporting “Relay For Life” for 15 years since she lost her sister to cancer. Her husband also is a cancer survivor.

For additional information, visit www.relayforlife.org/capecoralfl. If you want to volunteer, start a team, join a team, be a sponsor, make a donation, purchase a Luminaria, etc., you can contact Lisa at (815) 685-0057 or email her at jlparrothead@juno.com. Together we can make a difference!
Ford’s Garage Expanding into South Cape

The Ford & Firestone Restaurant Group, owners of Ford’s Garage, The Firestone and Los Cabos Cantina in downtown in Fort Myers, has announced they have entered into a long-term lease agreement to establish a new Ford’s Garage restaurant in Cape Coral. They will be located at the former Leapin’ Lizards building on Cape Coral Parkway.

“This development is a perfect fit for the CRA and its new leadership's vision for that area,” said Dana Brunett, Economic Development Director for the City. “We want to create an atmosphere of a walkable area that features numerous options for diners and visitors to the CRA.”

The owners of Ford’s Garage have created a brand they see as a solid franchise, which can be repeated throughout Florida. The Cape Coral location is their first venture outside of Fort Myers and will be a good test. This location will have the look of a 1920s gas station complete with garage doors on the exterior and Model T’s inside. This location also will sport the signature super-cooled strip along the bar to keep drinks cold – a great little novelty item for those hot summer days.

“The team at Ford’s Garage is extremely excited and is looking forward to expanding our concept within the great city of Cape Coral,” said Mike McGuigan, one of the owners of Ford’s. “We have been very well received not only by City officials but also the residents of Cape Coral. We look forward to adding to the local economy and job market.”

City Council Approves Early Voting for Local Elections

City Council approved early voting dates for the upcoming Primary and General elections for Mayor and Council Districts 1, 4 and 6. The Primary Election is September 10 and the General Election will be held November 5.

To ensure maximum voting opportunities, the Council approved six early voting days for Cape Coral voters in each election.

Primary Election Early Voting Days
August 31 (Saturday) and September 3 – 7 (Tuesday – Saturday)

General Election Early Voting Days
October 28 – 31 and November 1 – 2 (Monday – Saturday)

There are two locations for early voting:
Lee County Elections Cape Coral Branch Office
1031 SE 9th Place Suite #3
Lee County Elections Main Office (Ft. Myers)
2480 Thompson Street, 3rd Floor

Questions regarding Cape Coral elections should be directed to the City Clerk's office at (239) 574-0417.

New Project Manager for UEP Now Onboard

Paul R. Clinghan, the City’s new project manager for the Utilities Extension Project, started work on December 17 and has hit the ground running. Clinghan was hired by City Manager John Szerlag to oversee the upcoming UEP work, which is scheduled to begin in the Southwest 6 & 7 area.

Clinghan is a registered Professional Engineer in six states and the Virgin Islands. He has 25 years of engineering experience managing the design, bidding and construction of wastewater, water, reuse and stormwater projects throughout New England, Florida and the Mid-Atlantic Region. Clinghan most recently was a Senior Vice President and partner for Hoyle, Tanner and Associates, headquartered in Manchester, NH. He also sat on their Board of Directors.

“Paul has the right blend of skills, knowledge and experience to manage this multi-faceted project,” said Szerlag. “He will work with all the team members and stakeholders to ensure that the work is done in a timely and cost-efficient manner for our customers.”

Clinghan has a Bachelor’s of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, MA. He attended Northeastern University’s Building Technology Program and has been involved with the American Society of Civil Engineers, New England Water Environment Association and New England Water Works Association. Clinghan has co-authored several publications and papers, and participated in technical presentations.

Clinghan is married and has three children (twin boys and a daughter), and all graduated college. His wife is a Special Education teacher. One son is a 1st Lieutenant in the U.S. Army, and his twin brother is a Border Patrol Agent in Arizona. His daughter is a registered nurse in Tampa.
City Employees Contribute to Another Successful “Holiday for Heroes” Project

The City of Cape Coral employees again participated in the annual Holiday for Heroes donation drive organized by Jonette Kessack with Sip and Send Wine & Gifts in Cape Coral. This was the sixth year of the program, which selects a military unit serving in Afghanistan to receive “care” packages during the holiday season. The unit selected usually has a local soldier serving among the group.

For the 2012 project, Jonette was able to collect donations and raise enough money to ship 287 boxes to three troops serving in Afghanistan. The shipping costs are about $4,000 and are covered through the generosity of Sip and Send customers, the community and other businesses in the area. The boxes were assembled with the help of the Cape Coral High School ROTC.

“I want to thank the employees of the City of Cape Coral, all of our customers and the community for their contributions and assistance with this project,” said Jonette. “These packages mean so much to our troops during the holidays.”

South Florida Canoe and Kayak Club Offers New Opportunities

The South Florida Canoe Kayak Club is a non-profit organization that is partnering with the Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department to offer our community an insight into paddlesports. Centrally located at Lake Kennedy, the club offers development classes in the sport of Flatwater Sprint Canoe and Kayak. Sprint canoes and kayaks are different from recreational boats in that they are “tippy” yet move quickly through the water.

The Youth Development Program, which is designed for children ages 8 years – 15 years old, is an introduction to the Olympic Discipline of Flatwater Canoe/Kayak racing. Whether your child’s goal is fun, fitness or representing the United States as a National Team member, athletes will learn the fundamentals of the sport while building the foundation for future success. In addition to learning basic canoe-kayak skills and safety, athletes will develop leadership skills, a life-long habit of fitness, an appreciation for nature and our waterways, teamwork, a sense of citizenship, goal-setting and a strong work ethic. These programs are offered year-round and include twice-a-week practices or a longer once-a-week practice. All equipment is provided including kayak, paddle and life jacket. Participants need to bring a water bottle, swim shoes, plenty of sunscreen and a towel.

In addition to the introduction program, athletes have the opportunity to compete in several youth-based regattas held at Lake Kennedy. The first is the “Fun Regatta,” where teams have a chance to practice boats skills and racing in a variety of boats. No lanes are assigned, and no points are scored. It’s all about having fun. The other regattas will have marked lanes and will teach the athletes about racing within an actual race course setting. Individual athletes and crews will be awarded medals.

The South Florida Canoe Kayak Club offers a number of adult programs, private lessons, local and national racing opportunities. The Club also offers a para canoe program for disabled athletes to teach the same basic fundamentals and disciplines.

The Club is proud to welcome several U.S. National team members, world class coaches and International high performance athletes to train in Cape Coral throughout the year. For more information, visit www.sfckc.org or call Executive Director Melinda Mack at 239-443-6527.

Sounds of Jazz & Blues Returns to Marina Village

The Sounds of Jazz & Blues will be Saturday, March 23 along the banks of the Caloosahatchee River at the Westin Cape Coral Resort at Marina Village (Tarpon Point). National recording artist Lao Tizer headlines a fabulous night of jazz and blues music with two additional musical acts. Plenty of food and beverages will be available. Sorry, no coolers permitted at the event.

Gates open at 4 p.m. and the concert begins at 5 p.m. Tizer will perform at 8 p.m. Tickets are on sale now for only $15 in advance or $20 at the gate for general seating. VIP tickets can be purchased for $35 (includes food and drinks). For more information, visit www.CapeConcerts.com.
New “Squad 8” Fire Engine Placed into Service

Cape Coral Fire, Rescue and Emergency Management Services recently added a new Sutphen Fire Engine Pumper to its fleet of front-line fire apparatus at Fire Station 8. The new engine is classified as “Squad 8” and carries special operations equipment. The new pumper replaces a 2005 Emergency One Typhoon engine.

Special operations equipment includes high angle rope rescue, trench rescue, confined space rescue, structural collapse, heavy vehicle extrication, hazardous materials incidents, quick water rescue and rescue dive incidents. The new engine is one of the department’s four Advanced Life Support engines, and carries advanced life support equipment and medications.

Similar to the original engine, the new Squad 8 was designed to the specifications needed to accommodate the special operations needs within the city. The engine was built by Sutphen Fire Truck Manufacturing of Columbus, Ohio, and has a 1,000 gallon water tank, which holds 250 gallons more than the older truck. The engine has a 1,500 gallons per minute pump capacity.

The custom engine carries an additional 30 gallons of firefighting foam for flammable liquid fire attack. Along with the firefighting capabilities, the unit carries:

- Halogen Command Knight light tower for illumination during nighttime operations
- “Jaws of Life” Centaur Hydraulic Extrication Unit with the “Jaws” (spreaders)
- Hydraulic cutters for high strength/low alloy metals
- Hydraulic “rams” used for lifting dashboards from entrapped vehicle occupants
- 13-kilowatt generator
- Full complement of air bags for lifting operations
- Complete set of Rescue 42 struts for overturned vehicle stabilization
- New state-of-the-art ISG Thermal Imaging Camera to aid in locating victims in totally obscured locations as often found in structural fires.

The new Squad 8 is a much needed replacement for one of the busiest fire stations within the city. This new engine will provide reliability for many years to come.

City’s CapeTV Channel Now Available for Mobile Devices on Ustream.tv

The City of Cape Coral’s government access channel, CapeTV, is now available on the popular video streaming website Ustream.tv. 1Pro Media, the City’s CapeTV contractor, has set up a Ustream channel to provide access to live broadcasts and other CapeTV programming for users of mobile devices including iPads, iPhones and Android phones/tablets. The channel also can be viewed on standard laptops and desktop computer systems.

“With the popularity of mobile phones and tablets, we wanted to create access to our video programming for users of these devices,” said the City’s Public Information Director Connie Barron. “Our Ustream channel will make it more convenient to watch live meetings from any location with an available Internet connection.”

Until now, the only way to watch a live, City Council meeting was either on Comcast Cable’s Channel 98 or via a video stream link on the Agendas page of the City’s website. Unfortunately, the current video stream only works with Adobe Flash and Windows Media operating systems, and is not compatible with iOS devices.

The City of Cape Coral’s CapeTV Ustream channel can be accessed from the front page of the City website (www.capecoral.net) or users can go to www.ustream.tv/channel/cape-tv-city-of-cape-coral-florida. The channel also can be found by searching for “cape tv city” in Ustream.

NOTE: The City is using the free service option on Ustream, which means there will be some short ads that pop up before and during broadcasts.

Mobile device users will need to download the free Ustream app from their respective app stores to access the channel.

Dr. Lee Bush Retiring from Teaching

After 36 years in education, Administrator Dr. Lee Bush, is set to retire at the end of May from the City of Cape Coral Charter Schools. Dr. Bush began his career as a 5th grade teacher and bus driver in southwest Wisconsin. He moved to Florida and taught in Immokalee and Naples. Dr. Bush was named Collier County Teacher of the Year in 1988, and he became a principal at two Naples elementary schools.

In 1998, Dr. Bush was appointed superintendent of a rural Wisconsin school district. He returned to Florida in 2006 to become principal of Christa McAuliffe Elementary School, the second elementary in the City of Cape Coral’s Charter School System.

The City’s charter school system faced some challenges at the beginning. Dr. Bush, along with Oasis Elementary School Principal Steve Hook and former Oasis High School Principal Chris Terrill, are credited with providing the necessary leadership and direction that made the City’s charter school system a successful operation. The City of Cape Coral Charter School System now has four schools and 3,000 students. Dr. Bush became the administrator for the school system four years ago.

Dr. Bush and his wife Faye intend to travel extensively in their motor home. The couple is heading to California in June to visit two sons and their grandchildren. The Governing Board for the City of Cape Coral Charter School System will be selecting a new administrator in late March to succeed Dr. Bush.

We wish Dr. Bush well in his retirement. His outgoing personality, leadership and musical talents will be missed by all.
Health and Fitness Opportunities in the Parks

Did you know that exercise can add years to your life by helping to improve flexibility, strength, energy and coordination thus lessening your risk of injury? You do not have to be super-fit because every little bit of exercise counts and just getting started is a giant step forward for those who have been inactive. *Please Note: Individuals with health concerns should consult a physician prior to beginning a workout routine.*

If you are looking for free and affordable opportunities to increase your fitness levels and improve your health, check out your favorite park. Cape Coral’s parks are excellent resources for promoting healthy lifestyles by offering everything from walking and nature trails to fitness equipment, tennis and basketball courts, bicycle paths and open space.

Five parks in Cape Coral have fitness equipment, and three have fitness trails with various exercise stations situated along the paths. This allows for park visitors to experience an aerobic workout in addition to strength, endurance and flexibility training. The parks with fitness trails include Joe Stonis Park, Saratoga Lake Park and Del Prado Linear Park. The two parks with fitness equipment located in a common area are Jaycee Park and Lake Kennedy.

To find parks with walking trails, sports courts and other fitness opportunities, visit the Parks & Recreation website at www.CapeParks.com and click on the tab labeled “Outdoor Recreation.”

In addition to onsite fitness amenities, several of Cape Coral’s recreation centers offer regular exercise programs to support a healthy lifestyle. These programs range from aerobics and Zumba to dancing and yoga. See the current Parks & Recreation program guide for class times, locations and fees.

Regardless of how or where you choose to exercise, the best results are often achieved when you remember to think “FIT” (Frequency, Intensity and Time). When combined with a healthy diet, the benefits of good fitness can greatly improve your quality of life.

City Clerk’s Office Earns Certificate of Achievement for Passport Services

The City of Cape Coral is one of only seven Passport Application Acceptance Facilities throughout Florida, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to receive a perfect score on the 2012 Acceptance Facility Oversight Program “Acceptance Facility Review Report.”

The Acceptance Facility Oversight Assessment site visit included one-on-one interviews with the Facility Manager, inspections of facility space and security features, as well as real-time observations of Acceptance Agents accepting and executing passport applications from the general public. Nearly 300 facilities in the Miami Passport Agency’s Region underwent the same rigorous assessment.

“It is no small feat to be recognized as one of the best passport service facilities in the region,” said City Manager John Szerlag. “Our staff provides excellent service, and we encourage anyone with a passport question or need to visit our location at City Hall.”

Through staff’s hard work and exemplary service to the community, the U.S. Department of State Passport Services is able to accomplish their mission to issue secure travel documents to U.S. citizens while providing the highest level of customer service and professionalism.

U.S. citizens planning international travel may apply for their passports Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the City Clerk’s Office in City Hall located at 1015 Cultural Park Boulevard.

For application forms, additional detailed information on documentation required, fees, and other passport and international travel information, visit the only official website for passport information – www.travel.state.gov.

If you need to contact the City Clerk’s Office, please call 574-0411 or visit our website at www.capecoral.net.

Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife Keep Eye on Wildlife in City

Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife began in 2000 when a handful of citizens expressed a shared concern about the unprotected burrows of the burrowing owl. Over the years, the membership has grown and the organization has created a strong partnership with the City.

Cape Coral is known around the world as the place to find the largest population of burrowing owls. The city has about 2,500 documented burrows, and in 2005, Cape Coral City Council named the Burrowing Owl as the official city bird.

The dedicated volunteers with CCFW spend thousands of hours each year clearing and staking owl burrows, making perches, and hosting the annual Burrowing Owl Festival in February. The festival provides the resources needed to help protect and preserve all of Cape Coral’s wildlife treasures.

CCFW added a butterfly house at Rotary Park, built by volunteers with supplies donated by Home Depot. Free tours are conducted by volunteers on Monday, Friday, and Saturday at 10:30 a.m. The organization also provided input on the new Mohr Family Butterfly House built at Freida B. Smith Special Populations Center. Two gourd racks at Rotary Park and one at Sirenia Vista Park were installed by CCFW for purple martins that return to the city to nest. Purple martins are the only birds that depend on humans for their nests. This year, a class of home-schooled children monitored the nests weekly to record how many were occupied and how many young were born.

CCFW meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. at Rotary Park Environmental Center, 5505 Rose Garden Road. Visitors are welcome to attend. For more information about the Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife, call (239) 980-2593 or email contact@ccfriendsofwildlife.org. The website is www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org.
As a result of the ongoing energy management improvements implemented at City facilities in the past several years, 37 City facilities met or exceeded the Year 2012 goal to reduce electricity use by 10 percent from the 2008 baseline. Many facilities surpassed the 2012 goal, with 10 facilities exceeding the Year 2017 reduction goal of 25 percent. Four facilities surpassed the Year 2025 goal to reduce electricity use by 40 percent.

This achievement was attained at 33 of these facilities without any project funds. The cost savings for the electric energy was $225,000 in 2012.

The resulting electricity savings is equivalent to the annual power usage of 192 typical homes in Cape Coral. With this electricity savings, about 1,575 tons of coal would not be burned each year from a coal-fired power plant.

Cape Coral Recognized as One of the Top Digital Cities

The City of Cape Coral has been recognized as one of the top digital cities in the country by the Center for Digital Government in their 12th Annual Digital Cities Survey. Cape Coral placed 2nd behind Salt Lake City in the 125,000 – 249,999 population category.

“Cities that are investing in technology are seeing huge cost savings that are critical to operations and their ability to meet higher demand for services,” said Todd Sander, executive director for the Center. “These cities are true innovators and we applaud them as they work in the spirit of collaboration to provide extraordinary value to constituents despite budget setbacks.”

The survey focused on local governments demonstrating IT best practices to better serve constituents. Cape Coral was recognized in particular for the following unique factors:

- Modernized application systems
- Extensive use of cost-saving virtualization technology
- Formal best practice frameworks – ITIL & COBIT
- Management support for funding needed additional applications and critical capital requirements, and creativity in finding funding sources
- The City’s Energy Efficiency & Conservation Program and associated custom-built application for tracking energy use and progress
- Open Government feature (interactive drill down and benchmarking results)
- Shared service for technology initiatives with Lee County government

“We were very pleased to receive this award and recognition from the Center for Digital Government,” said John MacLean, director of the City’s Information Technology Services Department. “This award is shared among several City departments and employees who contributed to the factors that made Cape Coral unique among other municipalities.”

This is the third year that Cape Coral completed the Digital Cities Survey. The City placed 8th in 2008 and 6th in 2009.
Cape Coral Caring Center Looking for Donations

The Cape Coral Caring Center is an emergency food pantry that has served residents of Cape Coral since 1990. This 501(c)(3) organization relies on the generosity of our community to help residents in need.

While hunger is year-round, the needs of the Center increase exponentially in the summer. Donations usually decrease when the snowbirds leave Cape Coral. However, the needs of the Center’s clients increase during this time because paying customers have left the area and hours at work are cut. Children also are home and adding to the grocery bill.

Last year, the Cape Coral Caring Center helped more than 10,000 clients and provided more than 82 tons of food. The Caring Center gives food very generously and helps all income-eligible Cape Coral residents who come through their doors. In an effort to keep their pantry from being depleted this summer, the Center is asking for more food donations.

The Cape Coral Caring Center also helps with electric bills during the summer. When food donations are plentiful, more money is available to help residents keep power when it is hot and humid outside.

The Caring Center provides 31-day bus passes to be used to hunt for jobs and clothing vouchers from Kiwanis. Also, a bag of kid-friendly food is given to each school-aged child in a family. The bag of kid-friendly food is designed to feed a child for a week. The kid-friendly bags are distributed when children are out of school in June, July and August.

To drop off food donations, visit the Cape Coral Caring Center located at 4645 SE 15th Avenue. The number is (239) 945-1927.

City Website to Undergo Redesign

The City of Cape Coral’s government website will be undergoing a redesign over the next few months and will sport an updated and fresh look. The website also will be restructured and refocused to make the site more user-friendly.

“Over time, a website can become bogged down and somewhat stagnant for a variety of reasons,” said Public Information Director Connie Barron. “Our site is not unlike any other website that remains unchanged for several years, where the information becomes dated and the value of the site starts to degrade.”

City staff from the various departments will be reviewing their current web pages and removing old information. Using a website analytics program, staff also will be evaluating the value of each web page to determine if sufficient visitation warrants retaining the page or a particular document.

“We have more than 500 pages and at least as many documents within our website,” added Barron. “That might be just a tad much for our visitors to sort through.”

The redesign project is being completed for about $17,000, which will include one year of maintenance support and off-site hosting. Barring any unforeseen delays, the project should be done within 90 days. The redesign will include the specialized designs for Sun Splash Family Waterpark, Coral Oaks Golf Course, the City’s Economic Development Office and the Community Redevelopment Agency.

Summer Jobs Available at Sun Splash & Other Locations

The Human Resources Department is currently recruiting to fill summer positions at the Sun Splash Family Waterpark.

**Employment opportunities include:**
- Contract Aquatic Maintenance
- Contract Cash Clerk
- Contract Cash Clerk Supervisor
- Contract Counselor/Instructor/Special Populations
- Contract Food and Beverage Worker
- Contract Group Sales Associate
- Contract Guest Services Associate
- Contract Guest Services Shift Supervisor
- Contract Lifeguard
- Contract Restaurant Manager

Please go to www.capecoral.net and select “Jobs” under the “Find” navigation box. Review job-related duties and complete an online employment application.

The City also is accepting applications on a continuous basis to create an eligible list for qualified candidates to fill firefighter positions. Please visit our website to view additional employment opportunities available with the City of Cape Coral and the City of Cape Coral Charter Schools.

Bike Night Season Wraps Up in April

Fire up that Harley and come to the final “Bike Night” of the season on Saturday, April 13 from 5 p.m. – 10 p.m. This popular free event is held on SE 47th Terrace in downtown Cape Coral, includes live rock ‘n roll music on the main stage and a new country stage near the Dixie Roadhouse. There also will be a variety of vendors lining the streets and bike games throughout the evening. You do not need to own a motorcycle to have a good time at Bike Night. For complete details and vendor information, visit www.ccbikenight.com.

For more information on the City’s special events and other fun Parks & Recreation programs and activities, visit www.CapeParks.com or call (239) 573-3123.