On the Move
A Quarterly Update from Your City Hall

Cape Coral, Florida

WINTER 2009

A QuArterLy uPdate FROM yOur CITy HAll

Terry Stewart Resigns as City Manager

Carl Schwing appointed as interim city manager

Terry Stewart submitted his resignation to the departing City Council on Monday, November 9. Stewart has served as Cape Coral’s city manager since February 2002. He received six months severance and six months of health insurance as part of his agreement to resign.

Carl Schwing, the City’s assistant city manager since 2005, was appointed as the interim city manager. Carl has been with the City since 2002, first hired as the Department of Community Development director. He has been the department’s acting director, in addition to his role as assistant city manager, for the past year.

Cape Voters Elect New Mayor and Council Members

About 20 percent of the city’s registered voters went to the polls (or voted during early voting and absentee on November 3 to elected a mayor and three City Council members. After all the votes were counted, John Sullivan emerged as the Cape’s new mayor receiving 63 percent of the vote in a match with incumbent Jim Burch. Marty McClain was elected to the District 1 City Council seat in a close election with Jim Martin. Chris Chulakes-Leetz was successful in his race against incumbent Dolores Bertolini in the District 4 race. Kevin McGrail was chosen in City Council District 6 in a close race with John Cataldi Jr.

The new members were sworn into office at the November 9 City Council meeting. Bios on the new Council members are on page 4.

HIGHLIGHTS

[ ] Council Member Bios .................. 4
[ ] FY 2010 Budget/Wage Concessions .... 5
[ ] Off-Duty Firefighter Saves Pets .......... 6
[ ] Police Calendar on Sale .................. 8
[ ] Watch for Water Testing Scam .......... 9
[ ] Special Events on Tap .................... 10
[ ] City Receives Stimulus for Sidewalks ... 12
[ ] Self-Defense Classes for Women ........ 13
[ ] Officer Damien Garcia Improves ......... 14
[ ] Cape is Top 10 Digital City for 2009 ..... 15
[ ] City Employees Health Care Costs Increase .. 16
[ ] $5 Million Federal Grant for Del Prado .. 17
[ ] Neighborhood Stabilization Funds ...... 18
[ ] 2010 City Council Meeting Schedule .... 20
City of Cape Coral Council Members

**DISTRICT 1**
Kenneth McClain  
239-574-0437  
mmclain@capecoral.net

**DISTRICT 2**
Peter Brandt  
239-574-0437  
pbrandt@capecoral.net

**DISTRICT 3**
William Deile  
239-574-0437  
bdeile@capecoral.net

**DISTRICT 4**
Chris Chulakes-Leetz  
239-574-0437  
cleetz@capecoral.net

**DISTRICT 5**
Eric Grill  
239-574-0437  
egrill@capecoral.net

**DISTRICT 6**
Kevin McGrail  
239-574-0437  
kmcgrail@capecoral.net

**DISTRICT 7**
Derrick Donnell, Ed.D  
239-574-0437  
ddonnell@capecoral.net

City of Cape Coral Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interim City Manager</th>
<th>Assistant City Manager</th>
<th>Economic Development</th>
<th>Human Resources</th>
<th>Police Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carl Schwing</td>
<td>Carl Schwing</td>
<td>Carl Schwing, Acting Director</td>
<td>Wayne Howard, Director</td>
<td>Rob Petrovich, Chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Attorney</td>
<td>City Clerk</td>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>Information Technology Services</td>
<td>Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolores Menendez</td>
<td>Bonnie Potter</td>
<td>Mark Mason, Director</td>
<td>John MacLean, Director</td>
<td>Chuck Pavlos, Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Auditor</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>Fire Services</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation</td>
<td>Editor/Public Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dona J. Newman</td>
<td>Carl Schwing, Acting Director</td>
<td>Bill Van Helden, Chief</td>
<td>Steve Pohlman, Director</td>
<td>Connie Barron, Director</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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 humbly thank the voters in Cape Coral for having enough confidence in me to elect me as Mayor. You have my word that I will always do my best to serve the residents and businesses in a purposeful way. We need to get Cape Coral moving in the right direction, and I will need your support and your input in order to get this accomplished. It is important for me to know what you need and what you want, and my door will always be open to everyone.

I want to take a moment to thank all the volunteers and contributors who were the real backbone of the effort to get me elected. There were so many individuals who helped me in this endeavor. From my campaign manager to everyone on my support team, it was their efforts and hard work that won this election for me. This was a real grassroots effort if there ever was one, and there are so many people to thank. Unfortunately, there is just not enough space to name all of them in this message. But you know who you are, and you know how grateful I am for the time and support you provided.

More than a year ago, a close friend wrote a letter to the editor suggesting that I would make a good Mayor of Cape Coral. At the time, quite a few people thought that was a big laugh. As it turns out, his letter planted the seed that turned into reality.

I want to personally thank Sal Grosso who was my inspiration. When I originally got involved in Cape Coral Government, he was my mentor so to speak. I attempted to pattern myself after Sal. I wanted Sal to make this run but he declined. I thought then as I do now that he should be the one in the mayor’s seat. So, Sal will always be “Mr. Mayor” to me.

Now that the election is over, we need to put our differences aside and start working together. This is the only way we can get this train running on the right track. There are many things that need repair before we can start to move forward in a meaningful way. All of us need to put our shoulders to the grindstone and start pushing in the same direction.

Thank you once again to everyone who gave me encouragement and support to become your Mayor. Be assured I will be true to my commitments and promises.

Sincerely,

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City Manager’s Message

Welcome to our community newsletter! As you know, there have been some significant changes at City Hall over the past few weeks. First and foremost, Cape Coral voters elected a new Mayor and three Council members at the November 3 elections.

Our new Mayor is John Sullivan, while the new Council members are Marty McClain (District 1), Chris Chulakes-Leetz (District 4) and Kevin McGrail (District 6). The new Council members were officially sworn in at the November 9 Council meeting. I offer congratulations to all of our newly seated officials. We look forward to working with the Mayor and the entire Council in achieving their goals of better serving our residents.

At the same Council meeting, City Manager Terry Stewart submitted his resignation after nearly eight years of service to our City – the longest tenure of any Cape Coral manager. Terry served this city through the volatile ups and downs of our economy. He leaves behind a great group of City employees, who love their city, and day-in and day-out, display a dedication and commitment not always seen in government. We wish Terry well as he and his family seeks other opportunities.

We also offer our thanks to those Council members who are departing from the dais. Council Member Tim Day has served as the District 6 representative since 2000. During his time on the City Council, Council Member Day served as Mayor Pro Tem and sponsored several pieces of legislation to help keep our community and children safer. Council Member Dolores Bertolini was elected as the District 4 representative in 2005 and spent her four years working to improve the aesthetics and quality of life in our city. Council Member Gloria Tate returned to lend her considerable public service experience to complete the final year of the District 1 term after Jim Burch was appointed to the finish the term of former Mayor Eric Feichtaler. Mayor Burch leaves the dais after serving the City for two years – one as District 1 Council member and one as the City’s Mayor. Mayor Burch worked to raise the level of awareness of all governmental entities to the needs and challenges of Cape Coral. We thank all of them for their dedication and sacrifices to lead our community.

It is a new day in our city! As the Interim City Manager, I am looking forward to working with Mayor Sullivan and our entire City Council as we face the challenges ahead. Communication between the staff and City Council, as well as our citizens, must be a top priority to ensure the success of our city. With additional reductions in our property values projected again in 2010, crafting a budget to meet the needs of our community requires an open, methodical and civil dialogue, as well as advanced planning. Our staff will work closely with our elected officials to achieve their objectives and move the city forward.

I want to thank the Mayor and Council for the opportunity to serve as your City Manager in the interim. If we can ever be of service, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 574-0447.

Sincerely,
City in Good Shape for Dry Season Water Supply

The rainy season officially ends on November 30, and Cape Coral will enter the dry season. During the dry season, the city receives minimal rainfall, which can stress the St. Augustine grasses on many residential lawns. The City's dual-water system helps supply irrigation to potable water customers. There are several, 5-million gallon holding tanks that store reclaimed wastewater for circulation through the dual-water system. This water is supplemented with water from the freshwater canal system.

As we enter this dry season, the City is in very good condition as far as the supply of irrigation water. All of our canal basins are at or near full levels; however, this is not the time to become lax or overconfident with our water usage. The next rainy season will not begin until June 1, and those of us who have lived here a few years realize that the weather does not turn on and off exactly on these dates. We need to conserve our irrigation supplies in the event of an unusual drought condition. Residents must follow the watering schedule, and irrigate only on the days allowed. The watering schedule can be found in this newsletter and online at www.capecoral.net.

Meet Your New Council Members

Mayor
John Sullivan
Age: 66
Lived in Cape Coral: Since 2005
Education: High School / New York Institute of Finance/ Some College
Occupation: Brokerage Business – 25 Years Licensed Broker
Information Technology Consultant 17 Years
Political Experience: First elected office
Community Involvement: Activist, served on Utilities Expansion Committee
Family: Wife – Gisele; Mother – Josephine; Sister – Pat

District 1
Kenneth “Marty” McClain
Age: 51
Lived in Cape Coral: Since 2004
Education: High School Plus Construction Management and Catastrophic Property Damage Loss Accreditations
Occupation: Construction Management / Consultant
Political Experience: First Elected Office
Community Involvement: Active with the Lee County BIA (Building Industry Association) CCCIA (Cape Coral Construction Industry Association) and a Volunteer with Builders Care
Family: Married, Lisa is an RN with Lee Health Systems. Two adult sons.

District 4
Chris Chulakes-Leetz
Age: 54
Lived in Cape Coral: Since 1997
Education: Associate’s Emergency Medical Services, Chemeketa College, Oregon Bachelor’s in Business/Psychology, Governor’s State University, IL
Occupation: Residential Real Estate Associate (current) Paramedic/Firefighter - 20 years
Political Experience: First elected office
Community Involvement: PAWS (Pets Are Working Saints); Compassionate Friends; Grace Methodist Church
Family: Daughter, Christina (24); Son, Steven (22); Mother, Marguerite; Father, Dr. James Daris

District 6
Kevin McGrail
Age: 53
Lived in Cape Coral: Since 1989
Education: Bachelor’s in Medical Technology, Michigan State University Pontiac General Hospital Medical Technology; Internship Program (MT ASCP); MBA classes at University of South Florida (Edison Campus)
Occupation: Lead Medical Technologist at North Collier Hospital (18 years). Served on the Board of Directors for the Professional Association of Laboratory Medicine (PALM).
Political Experience: First elected office
Community Involvement: Active member of the Saratoga Lake HOA; Past Committee Chairman of Boy Scout Troop 2199. Past President of Peace River Dog Fanciers; Former volunteer tutor for Trafalgar Middle School (math/science); Raised puppies for Southeastern Guide Dogs and New Horizons Service Dogs.
Family: Married 34 years to Kimberly. Son, Joshua and daughter, Sarah; three beautiful grandchildren.

North Reverse Osmosis Plant Nears Completion

The new North RO Water Treatment Plant is scheduled to attain completion in January of 2010. The construction has reached 96 percent completion as of October.

Once the plant is online, it will be operated at or near its design capacity of 12 MGD. This will allow the City to cut back the operations at the Southwest RO Water Treatment Plant to allow for major repairs and refurbishment of plant equipment and structures. The Southwest RO Water Treatment Plant has operated continuously for more than 30 years, and this will be the first opportunity to do this much-needed major maintenance. Our operators are currently receiving intensive training on all of the new equipment so they will be ready to operate this new facility efficiently and reliably.
National Swim Center Project Update

The City of Cape Coral is working in partnership with the National Swimming Center Corporation to evaluate the feasibility of bringing a world-class swimming and tennis facility to the Academic Village property in the northeast Cape. The Academic Village property is located at the northwest corner of Kismet and Del Prado. The 180-acre parcel was purchased by the City in 2003.

The City agreed to participate in a feasibility study conducted by NSCC. They are about 50 percent into the site and civil review and planning. The Economic Impact study is done and the schematic design on the new Aquatic Center is also completed. USA Swimming, The International Swimming Hall of Fame, YMCA of America, United States Tennis Association, NCAA, College Swimming Coaches Association and American Swimming Coaches Association are all active participants in the study. The NSCC has also finalized its agreement with the USA Swimming Foundation, which includes Co-Branded Events, Shared Philanthropic Support, The New Champions Club, promotional marketing and ongoing program support. The announcement of this partnership was in November at USA Swimming’s annual “Golden Goggle” event in Los Angeles. This is swimming’s “academy awards” celebrating our Olympic team.

The NSCC continues with marketing efforts to the many different events conducted by national swimming organizations including YMCA, NCAA, WSCA (World Swimming Coaches Association), USA Diving, USA Waterpolo, USA Synchronized Swimming and United States Masters Swimming.

The City of Cape Coral has received proposals from three firms to conduct a review of the NSCC’s feasibility study once the study is completed. The City will select a consultant to provide those services soon.

City Employees Agree to $3.2 million in Wage Concessions

City employees agreed to $3.2 million in wage concessions to help bridge the budget shortfall this year. For FY 2010, all of the City’s bargaining unions agreed to across-the-board employee wage freezes, resulting in savings of $1.7 million. Another $1.3 million of savings was achieved through union concessions after changes were accepted in the annual leave program, along with changes in holiday pay for the Police Union, and furloughs for employees in the Blue, White, Supervisory, and Professional Unions. The furloughs, wage freezes and changes to the annual leave program also were applied to salary and union-exempt employees, creating additional savings of $202,879.

City employees also will be assuming a greater share of health care costs to help lower the increased cost from Blue Cross/Blue Shield to the City (see article on page 16 on Employee Health Care Costs).

Employees are a primary resource for the City in providing the services demanded by our community. About 93 percent of the City’s full-time employees are covered by bargaining unit agreements, and employee costs represent about 30 percent of the total budget.

Council Adopts FY 2010 Budget

The operating budget for Fiscal Year 2009-2010 was adopted by City Council on September 23. The total budget amount for all funds is $404.2 million. The City’s primary operating fund, the General Fund, comprises 34 percent of the total budget, or $137.3 million. The adoption of the annual operating budget requires a great deal of consideration by City Council. This year presented additional challenges due to lower state-shared revenues coupled with falling property values.

Planning and budget development for FY 2010 began at the City’s Strategic Planning session in December 2008. At that time, City Council was briefed on the preliminary revenue estimates and was introduced to various alternative revenue sources that were available for implementation. As the General Fund’s primary revenue source is ad valorem or property tax revenue, the City’s ability to provide basic services, which includes police and fire protection, is particularly vulnerable to the changes in the taxable value. Alternative revenue sources provide for revenue diversification allowing for greater stability of the General Fund and a reduced reliance on property tax revenue.

During the period of December thru June, the City Council held several budget workshops to review and discuss updated revenue estimates as well as potential service level impacts. On March 2, City Council set the target for the General Fund operating budget less reserves at $116.4 million, which was $13.5 million or 10.4 percent less than the FY 2009 budget. On July 14, the City Manager submitted his proposed total budget of $379.9 million with a General Fund budget that met the City Council’s target of the $116.4 million for operations. The General Fund budget at $116.4 million was supported by a millage rate of 7.7759.

To reach this target budget, a variety of cost-cutting measures were taken. This included wage freezes, furloughs and position eliminations at the personnel level. Capital equipment was eliminated, infrastructure maintenance was reduced and several programs eliminated. The funding for streetlighting would be reduced by $1 million, and General Fund support of Parks and Recreation programs such as Special Events (City and community sponsored), Special Populations, Athletic Leagues, Aquatics, and Environmental Recreation was reduced or eliminated. The Police school resource officer program would be eliminated as well as the canal dredging program.

While the City Council target budget was met, there was concern by City Council as to the impact on the City’s residents. As such, on August 3, the City Council set a proposed millage rate at 8.8241 for TRIM notification purposes. At this millage rate, property taxes would generate about $13.5 million more in ad valorem revenue; however, due to reductions in state-shared revenues, this millage only would allow for the same level of service as in FY 2009. The 8.8241 millage rate was established solely for budget planning purposes, and Council’s goal was to work with staff to achieve an acceptable balance between the services that would be provided and the cost to property owners.

Through reductions, cuts and employee concessions, the final millage rate was set at 7.9702 and supported the operations of the General Fund budget at $119.7 million. Funding of Parks & Recreation programs would continue as well as existing streetlighting. The school resource officer program was reinstated through grant funding from the Lee County School Board and additional operating cuts in the Police Department. The dredging program was included and will be fully funded by stormwater funds.

The City’s final operating budget as well as all workshop presentations can be reviewed online by visiting the Financial Services Department page on the City’s website at www.capecoral.net.
Cape PAL Boxer Wins State Title at PAL Florida State Championships

Ryan Gonzalez, a member of Cape Coral’s PAL boxing team, won a state title at the PAL Florida State championships in Fort Pierce this past weekend (November 7 – 8). Two other Cape boxers took home gold and silver medals, while a third placed high enough to move to the next level of competitions.

Ryan won the title in the 141-lb. “Open” Division. He has been in the Cape’s boxing program for the past four years and has won several state titles during that time. His next major competition will be the Golden Gloves on March 26 – 27. Ryan is a senior at Mariner High School.

Two of Ryan’s teammates won gold and silver medals at the state championships. Michael Trakhtenberg, a student at Challenger Middle School, won the gold medal in the 80-lb. division for 11 – 12 year olds. Michael’s younger brother, Alex Trakhtenberg, won a silver medal in the 75-lb. division for 8, 9 and 10 year olds. Alex is a student at Pelican Elementary.

Another Cape PAL boxer, Brian Johnson, lost a tough fight in the semifinals in the 165-lb. division for 15 – 16 year olds. Brian attends Ida Baker High School.

Michael and Alex Trakhtenberg, and Brian Johnson will be preparing for the Florida Silver Gloves on December 4 – 5 in Palm Beach.

The Cape Coral PAL boxing team is coached by John Sanderson, Felix Gonzales and Cape Police Officer Mike Anderson. Anyone who is interested in more information about the program can call 242-3950. Parents and students also can stop by the William “Bill” Austen Youth Center on Tuesday or Thursday from 6 – 8 p.m. when the team is practicing.

Coral Oaks Offers Gift Cards and PGA Instruction

The busy winter season is upon us, and the staff at Coral Oaks Golf Course is looking forward to seeing all of our winter season friends. Remember that Coral Oaks accepts tee times five days in advance and offers great rates, including discounted rates for Cape Coral residents. (Note: If you are a seasonal resident and own property in the Cape, we can make you a resident ID card to show whenever you play the course.)

The holidays are quickly approaching, and Coral Oaks Golf Course has the perfect gift idea for the golfers – holiday gift cards. Coral Oaks gift cards are available for purchase in any amount and can be redeemed for golf, merchandise, food and beverages, range balls and even golf lessons. Stop by the Coral Oaks Pro Shop to pick up some gift cards and finish your holiday shopping today.

Playing golf during the holidays is a great way to spend time with family and friends. Coral Oaks will be open on Christmas Eve for an 8 a.m. open play shotgun, and the range and course will close at noon. The course also is closed on Christmas Day. The course will maintain regular hours for the remainder of the holiday season, including New Year’s Day, when Coral Oaks will offer straight tee times beginning at 7 a.m.

**PGA instruction available:** If you are looking to improve your golf game or start playing golf, Coral Oaks offers a variety of PGA instruction opportunities. The course has golf schools, weekly clinics, junior clinics, private instruction and playing lessons at very competitive prices. Golf instruction is a key component in learning the game or improving existing skill and experience levels.

For new golfers, Coral Oaks’ professional staff can offer advice and instruction needed to get started on the right track, as well as make the game easier to understand and more enjoyable. Our staff will begin with basic fundamentals, from picking the right equipment to choosing what to wear. We will teach you how to swing the clubs, and give you an understanding of why the ball flies where it does. Coral Oaks golf instructors have more than 75 years combined experience and are here to help your game. Call Coral Oaks at (239) 573-3100 and schedule some lessons. “Every day is a great day at Coral Oaks.” We look forward to seeing you soon.

Off-Duty Firefighter Saves Pets and Home from Fire Damage

An off-duty Cape Coral firefighter’s quick response to a residential structure fire likely saved the lives of the five pets inside and prevented additional damage to the home.

At 9:08 a.m. on November 12, Cape Fire received a 911 call for a residential structure fire at 927 SW 4th Place. Dispatch advised fire crews that an off-duty firefighter was on scene and was assessing the situation.

Lt. Mike Camelo had been driving home from work when he noticed black smoke coming from the rear of the home. Camelo parked his vehicle and immediately performed a walk-around of the structure. He found that a small refrigerator on the back patio was on fire, and the heat was so intense that the rear sliding glass door was compromised.

As the fire began to encroach on the living room couch, Camelo grabbed a nearby garden hose and proceeded to extinguish the fire. He then performed a search of the residence, found no one inside except for the pets, and awaited the arrival of the fire units.

Lt. Mike Camelo’s actions not only saved this homeowner from more significant damage to the home but also saved the lives of her three dogs and two cats located inside the residence.

An investigation found that the cause of the fire was accidental. A hot cigarette ember was in a small trash can next to the refrigerator on the back patio. Damage estimate was $10,000.

Lt. Mike Camelo
Chiquita Lock Undergoes Emergency Repairs

The Chiquita Lock, which is the gateway from the Southwest Spreader Canal System to the Caloosahatchee River, was closed for emergency repairs after the concrete support column for the west gate suffered a major structural failure on October 2. City crews and outside contractors worked around-the-clock to get the gate repaired and put back into service. The Lock was reopened to boat traffic on October 14, which was an excellent turnaround time considering the amount of work that was involved.

Before work could commence, structural engineering firm Alliance Design Group was consulted to provide detailed plans for the needed repairs. They also provided a detailed inspection of all other components related to the lock. Once the plan was in place, the lock was dewatered, and the 20,000-pound west gate had to be removed by crane. The intake and discharge pumps also had to be removed, repaired and replaced.

Crews from every division of the Public Works Department along with marine repair contractors, American Marine Construction, Dolphin Boat Lifts and Thompson Pumps worked diligently from the time that the gate went down late on a Friday until the first boat passed through 10 days later.

A second scheduled shut down of the lock on November 17 added additional ballast tanks to the heavy gates to reduce the loads placed upon the operating mechanism. This work along with the required periodic maintenance will help ensure that the lock will remain operational well into the future.

Dry Season is Just around the Corner

Two-Day Watering Schedule Remains in Effect for All Cape

Although the rainy season still has some time left, all Cape Coral residents must remember that the rains will cease. When the sprinklers come back on, residents have two specific days and times to water their lawns.

The two-day irrigation schedule remains in place year-round for watering lawns. Residents on wells and 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 year-round for all of Cape Coral:

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

Lisa Barnes Promoted to Police Captain

Barnes is Cape Coral’s first woman to attain the rank of “captain.”

On October 19, the Cape Coral Police Department promoted their first female officer to the rank of “captain.” Lisa Barnes, an 18-year veteran of the Police department, is now the captain of the South District. The department also has one female lieutenant, Lt. Tracey Hollan, and four female sergeants.

Capt. Barnes was hired by the Cape Coral Police Department in 1991 and was on patrol until September 1993. She then was assigned to Persons Crimes focusing on sex crimes and crimes against children. In 1999, Barnes was transferred to Vice, Narcotics and Intelligence, and assigned to the Combined Law Enforcement Against Narcotics (CLEAN) Task Force for a year. In 2001, she moved to Property Crimes until being promoted to “sergeant” in January 2004. Barnes worked in Field Services until January 2007 when she was assigned to Professional Standards and became Acting Captain of the bureau in July 2008.

Capt. Barnes has an Associate’s degree in Legal Science from Mattatuck Community College in Connecticut, and Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in Public Administration from Barry University. Capt. Barnes’ husband, Sgt. Steve Barnes, works in the department’s Major Crimes Unit. They have two children, Eric and Rachel.

Two additional promotions were made at the ceremony with Master Corporal Brand Chenault and Detective Frank Antos Jr. moving to the rank of “sergeant.” These promotional opportunities resulted from retirement and pension buyouts. However, not all open positions were filled, as the Police Department eliminated at least 10 supervisory and command staff positions after the buyouts.

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A second scheduled shut down of the lock on November 17 added additional ballast tanks to the heavy gates to reduce the loads placed upon the operating mechanism. This work along with the required periodic maintenance will help ensure that the lock will remain operational well into the future.
Cape Coral Police Calendar Now Available – Sales to Benefit Officer Damien Garcia

The 2010 Cape Coral Police Calendar featuring officers with the Special Operations Bureau is now available for purchase at several locations. All proceeds from the sale of the $10 calendar will be donated to the family of Cape Coral Police Officer Damien Garcia, who was critically injured in an on-duty motorcycle accident in June. Officer Garcia continues to show improvement in his fight to recover from his injuries.

“We are very excited about the calendar and the opportunity to help Damien and his family,” said Cape Coral Police Sgt. David Gleason. “We hope the community will help us make this calendar a success and provide some financial assistance to Damien during his recovery.”

Cape officers spent several weeks preparing for the August photo shoot with Cherilyn Nocera of Nocera Photographic, Inc. in Cape Coral. Nocera donated her professional services to the project. Century 21 Sunbelt Realty generously donated the funds to print 1,000 copies of the calendar, and Linda Bryant with Bryant Graphics contributed her services for the graphic design.

The calendar can be purchased at several locations including the front lobby of the Cape Coral Police Department at 1100 Cultural Park Boulevard. Lobby hours are Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. The cost for each calendar is $10 and cash or checks are accepted. Make checks payable to “Cape Coral FOP.”

Other locations selling the calendar include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What’s Your Beef</td>
<td>130 Del Prado Blvd South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gearhead Tattoo</td>
<td>4425 Del Prado Blvd South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just Add Muscle</td>
<td>1830 Del Prado Blvd South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ooh La La Salon</td>
<td>415 Cape Coral Pkwy East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Century 21 Sunbelt Realty</td>
<td>725 Cape Coral Pkwy West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Minute Tan</td>
<td>1021 Cape Coral Pkwy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron’s Barber Shop</td>
<td>621 Cape Coral Pkwy East</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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New EAGLES Afterschool Program Offered at Eagle Skate Park

Eagle Skate Park has added a new adventure program – EAGLES (Exciting Afterschool Games & Lessons in Exercise & Skateboarding). This afterschool drop-in program is Monday – Friday from 2 p.m. – 5 p.m. and is designed for students who love to skateboard or want to learn. Participants are given homework assistance, play time on the playground, private skateboarding time, and are fully supervised by an EAGLES counselor. Once the program ends at 5 p.m., students are welcome to stay at the Skate Park and skate for free for the remainder of the day. The cost for the program is only $25 per child per week.

Most local schools provide free busing directly to Eagle Skate Park. For more information, or to reserve your child’s spot, call the Youth Center at (239) 242-3950.

Citizen’s Academy Offers Opportunity to Learn about Your City Government

City staff believes that City government and citizens can partner together to create a unified community. With that in mind, the City offers a Citizen’s Academy for Cape Coral residents.

This program challenges residents to commit to a 12-week class that will teach them what City government does, how they do it and why they do it. It is the goal of the program to help residents learn about their government and understand how the processes work. Graduates will become knowledgeable about their City government and can become true ambassadors for our city.

The 12-week course focuses on what it takes to run one of the largest cities in Florida. Participants will spend a minimum of 50 hours learning about each City departments, the City’s charter schools and the Community Redevelopment Agency.

Take the challenge and discover for yourself. Sign up at www.capeacademy.com. Enrollment is limited to Cape Coral residents and class size is limited. Additional information is available by contacting the program coordinator at 574-0446 or by email at citizensacademy@capecoral.net.
Cape Residents Warned about Florida Water Testing Scam

Cape Coral residents should be aware of a common fraud in which a water treatment firm tries to sell their water equipment to trusting homeowners using a false scheme. Doing business with these companies can cost a homeowner thousands of dollars for equipment that is unnecessary.

Many residents have reported that they have been contacted by phone, or by mail, by a company asking if the homeowner would like to participate in a water survey. They indicate that one of their representatives will be in your area, and they can come by and conduct the testing at no charge. The company then sends out a “technician” to “test” the homeowner’s water. After completing the water testing, the technician tells the homeowner that the water supplied to them by the City of Cape Coral is unsafe for drinking. While in the house, the technician will pressure the homeowner to purchase water treatment equipment. The water treatment equipment can cost in thousands of dollars, and failure to pay for the equipment can result in a lien filed by the finance company used by the water treatment company.

Scam artists also are going door-to-door posing as sales people for water treatment equipment. They may use unethical practices or schemes to entice homeowners to purchase equipment. The supplier is not affiliated with the City of Cape Coral, nor does the City provide home water treatment equipment. More importantly, if you are on the City’s water system, you do not need any water treatment equipment.

You may also receive a notice in the mail from “Florida Water Works” recommending that you test your water and allow them to do the testing for you. Most of these companies have several complaints filed against them with the Better Business Bureau. If they call you, show up on your doorstep or mail you a postcard, say “no thanks.”

Please know that the City of Cape Coral provides safe drinking water for its water customers, and the water supplied meets and surpasses all federal Drinking Water Regulations. We are required by state and federal agencies to test the water regularly for microbiological parameters. If you have any questions about the quality of your drinking water, please contact the Public Works Department at (239) 574-0701.

Veterans Clinic Coming to Cape Coral

The City of Cape Coral will be home for the new Veterans Affairs Clinic, which was recently approved for construction and will be built in the Hancock Creek Commerce Park at the corner of Corbett Road and Diplomat Parkway in northeast Cape Coral, Florida.

The construction management contract for the $53 million facility was awarded to local contractor Kraft Construction. At 224,000 square feet, the new clinic is double the size of the VA Clinic currently operating in Fort Myers. The new clinic will support the 200,000 veterans living in the five-county area in southwest Florida.

The VA Clinic will serve as a modern source of medical care for a host of clinical and technical disciplines within the governmental health care arena. This will be a beautiful, state-of-the-art facility with an impressive array of clinical services.

Veterans who qualify for medical services will have local access to diagnostic radiology components and advanced imaging specialties such as Nuclear Medicine, CT, MRI, Mammography, Fluoroscopy and Ultrasound (including vascular Doppler).

The clinic also will house cardiology services and cardiac non-invasive diagnostic services; gastro intestinal, urology, orthopedics, ophthalmology, audiology, dermatology, ambulatory surgery, mental care services as well as primary care services. The clinic will likewise contain a wide variety of laboratory services to supplement and support the other medical care disciplines.

Rep. Connie Mack was instrumental in bringing the new VA clinic to Cape Coral. He sponsored the legislation, which was approved by Congress in September 2008.

“This new VA outpatient clinic is a critical project for Cape Coral and the rest of Southwest Florida,” said Rep. Connie Mack. “For too long, many veterans in Lee and Collier counties have had to drive to St. Petersburg for specialty care. That will end soon.”

Other medical enterprises and businesses commonly locate in the vicinity of a Veterans Affairs Clinic. The bottom line is that Cape Coral will see new jobs created as a result of this tremendous project.

The groundbreaking for the new clinic will be held in January 2010, and the facility should be completed by November 2011.
A Sense of Community – It Starts in Parks and at Community Special Events

When asked what is unique and special about the City of Cape Coral, many residents mention the great variety of special events held in the community on a regular basis. Developing and building a sense of community is one of the basic goals of the Parks and Recreation Department. This is accomplished in many ways including assisting with special events, which bring the residents and city visitors together for a common purpose – to celebrate, participate and have fun in a united fashion.

For the past 20 years, the Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department’s Special Events Division has both assisted community organizers and produced events for the citizens of Cape Coral. The Special Events Division has two full-time city employees and a handful of contract employees who help transform Cape Coral into “the place to be” for entertainment and excitement for more than 20 events per year. The Annual Coconut Festival, Tour de Cape, Holiday Festival of Lights, Annual Cape Coral Art Festival, and Bike Nights, are a few of the events. In the past few months, the Division has assisted with the Veteran’s Parade, Columbus Day Parade and Italian Food Festival, Kid’s Fest, two “Movie in the Park” nights and Bike Night. As the weather grows more comfortable, many fantastic activities are scheduled to take place.

➤ Bike Night
The festivities begin on Saturday, December 12 from 5 p.m. – 10 p.m. on SE 47th Terrace for Bike Night. Activities include an event called “Motorcycle Olympics,” which is always exciting for participants and spectators. The main stage will be rocking with live music.

➤ Boat-a-Long Parade
Four Freedoms Park is home to the land activities for the Annual “Boat-A-Long” Parade, which will take place on Sunday, December 20. The land activities, including a free movie in the park, begin at 4 p.m. and the unique boat parade begins at 7 p.m. in the Bimini Basin. For more information about participating in the boat parade, please email www.CCboatparade@aol.com.

➤ Festival of the Arts
Several additional events are planned for Cape Coral in 2010 beginning with the 24th Annual Cape Coral Festival of the Arts on January 9 and 10. This event is sponsored and organized by the Cape Coral Rotary Club. Cape Coral Parkway will be transformed into a cultural mecca with more than 300 juried artists and crafts people. The show features some of the best artwork found in the nation and admission is free. Last year, more than 70,000 people attended and enjoyed the culture. The hours are 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. each day.

➤ Tour de Cape
The following weekend, you can fulfill your New Year’s resolution to get active and healthy at the Tour de Cape. The annual ride begins Saturday, January 16. Regardless of your fitness, there is a perfect ride for everyone. Choose the competitive 100-mile trek, 62-mile course, 31-mile excursion, or 15-mile family-friendly fun ride. A 5k running and walking event closes the weekend on Sunday, January 17.

➤ Lee County Senior Games
The month of January wraps up with the annual Lee County Senior Games. Hundreds of local Lee County residents ages 50+ will compete in nearly 20 activities. For more information about these events and how to participate or volunteer, please call (239) 573-3123.

Kayak Shack Open for Adventure at Four Mile Cove
Are you looking for something fun and adventurous to do, but don’t want to spend your whole day driving? Cape Coral Parks & Recreation operates a kayak rental concession at Four Mile Cove Ecological Preserve. The kayak trail at this preserve involves narrow mangrove tunnels and a portage. Kayakers can reach the Caloosahatchee River in about 90 minutes, depending on how much exploring of the smaller, side trails is done. Kayakers easily could spend four hours paddling around the preserve and the creeks around the cove.

The paddling trail at Four Mile Cove is not intended for beginners or small children. You must be able to lift 40 – 60 pounds and be in fairly good physical condition to get past an 800-foot portage.

The Kayak Shack is open from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. on weekends from now through May 30, 2010. Go to www.CapeParks.com and choose Parks & Facilities; Environmental Parks & Facilities; Four Mile Cove Ecological Preserve to see rental rates and get additional information. You also can call (239) 549-4606.

“The Protector” Statue Anchors Plaza of Cape Police Headquarters
On September 11, the Cape Coral Police Department unveiled a new statue at the plaza of the Police Headquarters. “The Protector” is a nearly life-sized replica of a police officer holding the hand of a child.

The statue was designed by Minnesota-based Brodin Studios, and is cast in bronze and seated on a black granite base. The black granite base and wall panels were donated in part by Coral Ridge Cemetery and Dignity Memorial. The statue weighs 700 pounds. Brodin Studios specializes in military, police and fire statues and monuments. Numerous “Protector” statues have been erected at police agencies around the country.

The plaza is a small, open area located on the northeast end of the Police Headquarters. The Protector statue is illuminated at night.
The newest item for this area, which is scheduled to be unveiled soon, is the Tribute to a Soldier Statue. The statue will be placed on the east side of the flag array and will depict a United States serviceman saluting the flag with an Iraqi child mimicking the soldier in salute while holding a soccer ball. This entire area is a symbol of recognition to those who have secured and preserved our freedom and liberties, and the area is a tremendous asset at the Four Mile Cove Ecological Preserve.

If individuals would like to make a contribution to the Iwo Jima Restoration Fund, they may do so by contacting the Cape Coral Community Foundation, which established the Craig Fuller Iwo Jima Restoration Fund. Craig was a serviceman who lost his life in Iraq, and his family has established this fund to assist the City in the restoration of the Iwo Jima Statue.

Veterans Memorial Area Becoming a Destination at Four Mile Cove

On September 21, City Council approved Resolution 63-09 sponsored by Council Member Bill Deile to formally recognize the Veterans Memorial Area at Four Mile Cove Ecological Preserve. This area has been used as a veterans’ area since the opening of the Midpoint Veterans Memorial Bridge in November 1999. The Iwo Jima Monument was the original piece placed within the area, and since that time, many additional memorial areas have been created. The most recent addition is the construction of a 40-ft. x 60-ft. shelter by the Veterans Midpoint Memorial Charitable Trust, Inc.

Other memorials within the area include the Welcome Home Electronic Sign, Chosen Few Memorial, Submarine Anchor, Korean War Memorial and several commemorative bricks recognizing individuals who had served or were being remembered by family members.

Public Works Department Reorganized for Efficiencies

For the past several months, the Public Works Department has been implementing a departmental reorganization approved by City Council. The new organizational structure will establish divisions based on revenue sources and the type of work performed for the City of Cape Coral while focusing on hierarchy and supervisor to subordinate ratios.

They have developed a universal hierarchy that fits throughout the department – where the structure in one division imitates the structure in others. By doing this, the department has eliminated an entire layer of supervision. Using this new structure and the thought process to realign our resources, the department has been able to develop a four-division department: Transportation, General/Support Services, Stormwater and Utilities. Previously, the functions of Public Works operated with nine different divisions.

The previous fiscal year, the Public Works Department had five divisions operating under the General Fund; the new structure now will have only two. (See new organizational chart).

This new structure will streamline operations within the department by consolidating points of contact for decision making and more effectively serve the city and sister departments.
Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system

The City successfully implemented the JD Edwards EnterpriseOne v9.0 Financial Management Software System on August 31. The following areas were included in the scope: general ledger, financial reporting, cash receipting, accounts payable, accounts receivable, purchasing, project accounting, and grant management and accounting. Utility billing is estimated to go live in January 2010. The implementation methodology was a six-step process:

1. Define/Plan – created a successful project strategy, requirements, and scope.
2. Model – developed the future system procedures.
3. Configure – necessary programming and preparation for production.
4. Validate – resolved issues, tests, and readiness acceptance prior to go live.
5. Go Live! – placed the system in production.
6. Refine – continuous process improvement and reviews as well as ongoing support.

The new Financial ERP system will drive the enterprise-wide information technology strategy to serve the City’s immediate IT needs as well as form the base for future technology expansion. The benefits of the JD Edwards ERP system, both qualitative and quantitative, will enable the City to achieve an enterprise-wide vision and infrastructure for information technology. The new software will help with the efficient and effective management of core administrative functions.

City Receives $970,000 in Stimulus Funds for Sidewalks

On August 21, the Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization approved the allocation of $970,000 of stimulus funding to three sidewalks projects within the City of Cape Coral. These projects are intended to retrofit with sidewalks along three, four-lane divided roadways located at:

- Cape Coral Parkway from Agualinda Boulevard to west of Chiquita Boulevard ($115,000)
- Beach Parkway from Surfside Boulevard to Chiquita Boulevard ($505,000)
- Nicholas Parkway from Santa Barbara Boulevard to SR/78 ($350,000)

On November 2, City Council authorized the Mayor to enter into an agreement with Florida Department of Transportation to use the aforementioned funding to build the sidewalk projects using in-house labor. Thanks to this funding and other grants awarded to the City for future sidewalk construction, eight positions were preserved within the City’s budget. Construction of these projects will begin as soon as the pertinent agreements are fully executed, expected by the end of the year.

Vote on North Spreader Agreement Extended into January

The North Spreader Ecosystem Management Agreement (NSEMA) process, which began in July 2008 involving many government agencies, environmental groups, and interested members of the public is nearing completion.

The purpose of the process is to develop the strategies necessary to protect environmental quality and wildlife habitats in Matlacha Aquatic Preserve, the state-owned buffer preserve, and Charlotte Harbor in relation to the North Spreader canal system and the entire 117 square mile Gator Slough watershed. Under the provisions of the related legal agreement executed in May 2008 by the City of Cape Coral, Lee County Board of County Commissioners, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and a recently approved extension, consensus on the improvement strategies is to be developed by January of 2010.

In the short-term, the Ceitus stormwater barrier and boat lift were removed in July 2008 as a temporary measure to arrest further erosion damage to the tidal wetlands and mangrove forest. Since removal, the tidal flow through the west side breach has essentially stopped, arresting the erosion damage west of the barrier, as was hoped.

The results of the EMA will determine the long-term outcome. If an agreement is reached by the stakeholders on projects to be implemented, which will provide a greater Net Environmental Benefit than reconstructing the stormwater barrier and boat lift, then the agreed upon projects will be completed as the long-term solution. If agreement is not reached, the City of Cape Coral will submit permit applications for the re-construction of the barrier and boat lift, and complete the reconstruction as the long-term solution following issuance of the permits.

Thirteen full-day stakeholder meetings plus several technical committee meetings have been held. Several field trips were taken to evaluate numerous aspects of the watershed and ecosystems. Many participants have provided valuable scientific and engineering work products to assist the group in addressing questions and opportunities. Productive discussions and presentations on the Eco-System Management Agreement process, historic ecosystems, development changes, estuarine habitat, mangroves, salt-marshes, exotic vegetation, fisheries, oysters, sea grasses, historic creeks, current conditions, water quality, Cape Coral water management projects, salinity trends, hydrodynamic modeling and many other issues. The net environmental benefit impacts of the projects under consideration were evaluated.

The proposed projects to be included in the EMA were reviewed at the 13th NSEMA meeting on October 9. The group was in general consensus with some requested changes, which are being evaluated for review and a consensus vote. The scheduled vote has been moved out until January 2010.

The projects under consideration which are proposed to be implemented by the City of Cape Coral include:

- Adoption of a Cape Coral fertilizer ordinance
- Changes the Cape Coral Seawall Engineering Design Standards for saltwater canals on the North Spreader system to provide structure which is beneficial to marine habitat.
- Storm water treatment improvements
- Condition based timing for development of public sewer systems
- Maintain the Cape Coral canal dredging profile
- Arrangements for meetings regarding coordination to improve flows, timing and distribution of water to the state park and aquatic preserve.
- Implement boating related enhancements
Cape Coral Residents Celebrate Safe Communities

On October 3, the Cape Coral Police Department challenged the community to get involved in preventing crime. As part of the Celebrate Safe Communities initiative, the Police Department and Neighborhood Watch of Cape Coral sponsored a Community Safety Fair to demonstrate that crime prevention is not only a police department priority but a community priority as well.

The Safety Fair, which was held in the parking lot of Belk Department Store, was a great opportunity for the public to interact with law enforcement officials and learn how to prevent crime in their home, at work or school, and when venturing out.

More than 300 residents took part in the Safety Fair. In addition, 75 children were fingerprinted and received DNA sampling kits. Cape Police distributed 100 gun locks, and 50 bicycle helmets and safety lights were given to children of all ages. Residents also brought their personal and financial documents, which were shredded onsite in a proactive way to prevent identity theft.

The Safety Fair featured a variety of interactive displays that taught residents about home security, gun safety, child safety, bicycle safety, identity theft and personal safety/self defense.

“This was a great opportunity for us to teach residents how to stay safe, and protect themselves and their homes,” said Martha LaForest, CCPD Crime Prevention Specialist. “Being aware of your surroundings and securing your home and vehicles are basic steps to preventing crime.”

Residents were also treated to demonstrations from the Cape Police K-9 Unit, which always proves to be a big hit with the crowd. In addition, the Cape Coral Fire Department, Mobile Command Unit, Forensics Unit, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Neighborhood Watch, Project Lifesaver, Do the Right Thing and Lee Memorial Blood Center provided demonstrations and information.

Cape Police to Offer Classes on Self-Defense Strategies for Women

The Cape Coral Police Department is sponsoring monthly classes on self-defense strategies for women with a class in December and several more scheduled through October 2010. The three-hour classes will be from 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. at Koryu Fitness located at 415 Cape Coral Parkway West. Cost for the class is $25.

Under the instruction of Sensei Nick De Paolo, women will learn realistic options that will help them avoid, escape and survive an assault. Class participants will discuss how to be more aware of their surroundings; how to recognize and avoid potentially harmful situations; and, how to reduce their chances of an incident. Two-person drills will help women develop an instinctive response to what is called “Habitual Acts of Physical Violence.”

The program is designed for women of all ages and physical condition, and no previous experience or training is necessary. Mothers are encouraged to bring their daughters to learn a variety of self-defense strategies that can help increase personal safety.

Dates for classes in 2009:
December 16

Dates for classes in 2010:
- January 20
- February 17
- March 17
- April 21
- May 19
- June 16
- July 21
- August 18
- September 15
- October 20

Payment is required prior to taking the class, and all participants must sign a waiver at the door.

For more information, contact the Cape Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit at 242-3710. A brochure and registration form is available on the main page of the City’s website at www.capecoral.net (right column).
Public Safety Day at Christa McAuliffe Elementary

Students at Christa McAuliffe Charter Elementary had the opportunity to meet police officers, firefighters, deputy sheriffs, paramedics and Coast Guard members at their annual Public Safety Day on Thursday, October 22. This is the 4th year that the school has hosted this event for the kids.

Throughout the day, students rotate through six clusters to learn about careers in the field of public safety. Students get the opportunity to meet the men and women in law enforcement, emergency services and fire protection. At each cluster, they hear about the duties and responsibilities of these role models.

The Cape Coral Police Department was at the event with their Mobile Command Center and motorcycle officers. Firefighters with the Cape Coral Fire Department brought a ladder truck and smokehouse for the kids to enjoy. Lee County EMS had an ambulance at the school, and the Lee County Sheriff’s Office and U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary attended as well.

At the end of the event, the students wanted to send a special message to one of Cape Coral’s motorcycle officers who could not participate this year but made a lasting impression last year when he attended. While attending the 2008 Public Safety Day event, Officer Damien Garcia noticed a student was wearing some old, tattered gym shoes. During his lunch break, Officer Garcia stopped back by the school and anonymously dropped off a pair of sneakers for the young boy.

On June 2, Officer Garcia was critically injured in a motorcycle accident while on duty. He continues to recover at a hospital in Miami. Students wanted Officer Garcia to know that he remains in their thoughts and prayers each day.

Officer Damien Garcia Continues His Road to Recovery

At the request of Officer Damien Garcia, Cape Coral Police Chief Rob Petrovich recently traveled to the east coast of Florida to visit with Damien. Chief Petrovich was happy to accept the invitation to spend time with Damien and his mother, Lili.

“The most encouraging thing that I found was that Damien is very much alive mentally and is very much aware of his surroundings and circumstances,” said Chief Petrovich. “His challenge seems to be more within the physical realm with respect to his motor skills and coordination.”

Chief Petrovich was amazed at the improvement Damien has made in the five months since he suffered critical injuries in a June 2 motorcycle accident while on duty. However, Damien’s physical therapist pointed out that the progress he has made has come in the past two months, as he spent most of the five months in a coma.

“We can only imagine how far he will come in the next few months,” said Petrovich. “We are hoping that it will only be a short time before Damien can come to visit his family over here.”

Officer Garcia’s family is extremely grateful for all the prayers and support that the Cape Coral community has provided for Damien. Fundraisers, including the 2010 Police Calendar, continue to help provide financial assistance for Officer Garcia and his family.

Change in Policy for Adding New Streetlights

The main benefit for streetlights is to provide illumination on the public streets or roads within the Cape Coral road network, and aid in the safe and orderly movement of vehicular traffic. City of Cape Coral streetlights were installed exclusively to illuminate major public streets and roads, and pedestrian infrastructure, and this installation must be justified by a traffic engineering study. Any secondary benefit, such as perceived personal security, or the lighting of yards, driveways or private property is considered coincidental.

Due to budget reductions, the City of Cape Coral will no longer pay for new streetlights on City roadways for secondary benefits. Prior to this year’s budget, the City would process and cover charges related to the installation of streetlights. Beginning October 1, the policy was changed. Funding no longer is available to add new streetlights for non-safety reasons.

The City will continue to pay the electric charges associated with existing streetlights. Residents who still wish to pursue the installation of streetlights for non-safety reasons can contact LCEC directly. Their contact information is below:

Customer Service – (239) 656-2300 or 1-800-599-2356
7 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. - Monday through Friday
Website: www.lcec.net
Cape Coral Moves Up in Top 10 Digital Cities Ranking for 2009

The City of Cape Coral has been ranked as one of the Top 10 most technology-advanced cities in the 2009 Digital Cities Survey published by the Center for Digital Government, which partners with the National League of Cities to present the awards. Cape Coral placed 6th in the 125,000 – 249,999 population category, which is two spots higher than 2008. In winning this recognition, the City of Cape Coral joins other major cities that have invested in information technology to “create a seamless environment between local governments and constituents.”

The 2009 Digital Cities Survey focused on the implementation and adoption of online service delivery, and the technology infrastructure and architecture that make the transformation to digital government possible. The survey looks for the extent to which both wired and wireless broadband communication links are deployed as well as a city’s use of other data center technologies and special projects to meet the public need.

Tips to Opening a Business in Cape Coral

Plan ahead to ensure compatibility and compliance with all codes

If you are planning to open a new business, expand an existing business, or relocate within the City of Cape Coral, please contact the Community Development staff for assistance. They can help address any issues or address any requirements that might need to be resolved before you sign a lease, letter of intent, or any other agreement that will commit you to a particular facility. There may be building and zoning questions to address so that the facility will accommodate your needs without costly delays and expensive remodels.

Did you know that when a business moves into a new location, the Florida Building Code requires a building permit be issued whenever the type of business changes? Depending on the business, the building could require substantial modifications and updates to meet current code requirements before the business can open. These modifications can be extensive and expensive. They also can significantly delay your opening. If this information is obtained before a lease agreement is signed, the delays and costs might be avoided.

The business space will also come under the requirements of the NFPA (fire code). These modification requirements also can be costly, and understanding what is required before you commit to a space can save you a lot of frustrations.

You also must ensure the business you plan to open is compatible within the zoning district where the building is located. This will prevent additional delays, and the need to apply for variances or special exceptions.

When you start your search for the location of your business, talk to your realtor. Choose multiple locations and rate them by preference. Once you have a list of locations, bring them to City Hall for staff to review and advise you on which ones best suit your needs and time schedule. Also, bring along conceptual plans for the new business. We can assist you in making the best choice and inform you of what you should expect.

Remember, by taking a few short moments to determine what requirements you may need to meet before you make that commitment, you can save precious time and money during the process of opening your new business. Please contact 574-0546 (option #6) for building permitting or call 574-0553 for zoning information.

Recreation Department Offers Exciting “School’s Out” Programs

When school is out, you can count on Parks & Recreation to be in. The Youth Services Division offers full day child care in accordance to the Lee County School District calendar. These programs are offered to students in grades pre-K through 9th grade during holidays, professional duty days and hurricane make-up days. Youth Services staff members are recreationally trained, and the program is licensed by the Department of Children and Families.

School’s Out programs are located at Oasis Elementary (3415 Oasis Boulevard) and run from 6:30 a.m. – 6 p.m. Full-day programs cost only $26 per child with a second child discount available. The program includes field trips, guest speakers, arts & crafts, sports, indoor games and more. Lunch is provided but we request two healthy snacks from home. Join Youth Services for a safe school’s out day adventure. For more information, or to register your child(ren) for the next school’s out program, call the Youth Center at (239) 242-3950.
City Administration Begins Team Approach to Identify Additional Savings in Current Budget

Interim City Manager Carl Schwing and his staff are beginning the process of re-examining City government and the current budget to evaluate all City services and identify potential cost-savings.

“Keeping our pledge to ‘move the ship forward,’ staff and I will be reviewing the current budget from a team approach using the Lean Coordinator and Consultant to assist in our discussions,” said Schwing. “We hope to find additional opportunities for savings without impacting service levels to any significant degree.”

City staff will be focusing on what makes “common sense” in an era of slim resources. By using the Lean Government approach, the City staff can apply the Lean scrutiny they have used on a targeted basis toward a more holistic view of City government. City Council will be kept updated on the progress of the team.

City Employees Pay More to Help Reduce City’s Health Insurance Costs

A recommendation that City employees pay more for health insurance was discussed during the budget debate this year. With the new health insurance contract effective January 1, 2010, City employees will be paying higher out-of-pocket costs and fees, which helped lower the overall increase to the City for health insurance premiums. Because employees continue to shoulder a higher financial burden for health care, the City’s increase from Blue Cross/Blue Shield was reduced from 15.78 percent to nine percent. This 6.78 percent reduction amounts to $1,068,874 in cost savings to the City.

Other local governments also experienced higher premiums. The City of Fort Myers received a 13 percent increase and made no change in benefits. The Lee County School District renewed their insurance in April 2009 with a 24 percent increase in premiums. The District added an HMO plan and eliminated a higher-cost PPO plan.

The City of Cape Coral offers health, dental and vision insurance to City employees. The City covers the health insurance premium for the employee; however, employees must pick up the additional premium costs for any children or a spouse. Cape Coral provides no subsidy for dependent care premiums. Other local governments in Lee County not only cover employee premiums but also provide some form of subsidy for dependent care.

The dental and vision insurance is made available to City employees but premiums are paid entirely by the employee.

For employees in the City’s HMO plan (which is the majority of City employees), co-pays for various services will increase from 25 percent to 400 percent. Some services that had no co-pay will now have co-pays of $100 or $250. The emergency room co-pay doubled from $75 to $150, while the in-patient hospital co-pay increased from $500 to $750. Maximum out-of-pocket costs for employees in the HMO went up 50 percent from $2,000/$4,000 to $3,000/$6,000.

Since 2004, City employees have shouldered increasing out-of-pocket costs for health care in order to lower the increases in the insurance premiums to the City.

Sun Splash Wraps Up Successful Season

During an especially hot and humid summer, there was always one place Cape Coral families could cool off, laugh and enjoy the excitement of speed slides, a lazy river, and an oasis with cascading waters tame enough for small children – Sun Splash Family Waterpark. Sun Splash’s 2009 season was very successful, with many citizens and visitors commenting about all the improvements this past year. Impressions were immediately enhanced when brand new landscaping gave the park a plush, green environment, which allowed guests to escape to a tropical atmosphere. Additional amenities were upgraded including the gift shop, restrooms, the addition of more beverage stations, and a new, more efficient ordering system at the Calypso Café – Sun Splash’s main eatery.

In addition to visual changes, Sun Splash experienced an increase in attendance over last year by hosting nearly 153,000 people during the 2009 season. This attendance statistic is outstanding when considering that the vast majority of waterparks in the nation saw their attendance decrease in the turbulent economy. Also, Sun Splash was open five less operating days in 2009, yet still achieved higher attendance for the season.

Family Fun Night, one of the park’s special programming events, was expanded to five nights this season and reached capacity nearly every event. The revamped season pass program, which offered extremely affordable “Early Bird” prices and allowed pass holders unlimited entry into the park, also was very successful this year. The number of season pass holders grew from 529 in 2008 to 3,240 in 2009.

Customer satisfaction was very high this past season. In a recent survey, over 72 percent of all Sun Splash guests rated the overall value and experience better than comparable recreation options. Customer service also received fantastic positive ratings over 70 percent.

Safety at the park was unparalleled once again this year. Starfish Aquatics, an independent safety auditing firm, awarded Sun Splash Family Waterpark with the designation of a 5-Star Facility. Sun Splash is the only facility since Starfish’s inception several years ago to achieve a 5-star rating in every audit. The waterpark also helped with community safety by continuing to offer “learn to swim” lessons for children and toddlers, and several free water safety awareness clinics.

Now that Sun Splash has closed for the year, the staff is already hard at work planning for the 2010 season, which will begin in March. For more information on Sun Splash Family Waterpark, off season programs, and season pass opportunities, visit www.SunSplashWaterpark.com.
Boat Slip Rentals Available at Yacht Basin and Rosen Park

Winter is the perfect time of year for boating enthusiasts to enjoy the sun and fun of Southwest Florida. With close to 400 miles of canals, the City of Cape Coral has been identified as one of the water wonderlands of the Southwest Florida coast. For those who may be new to boating in the area, all of the state’s regulations regarding boats and boating can be viewed online at www.MyFWC.com.

In addition to maintaining five public boat ramps, the City of Cape Coral Parks & Recreation Department has two locations that offer daily, monthly and annual wet boat slip rentals.

Cape Coral Yacht Basin

The Cape Coral Yacht Basin is an 89-slip, wet storage only marina located in the southeast portion of the city. The marina can accommodate vessels up to 50 feet in length and 16 feet in beam. Free amenities at this location include showers, laundry, parking (one vehicle), use of a junior Olympic-size pool, outdoor racquetball courts and tennis courts. Hours of operation are 7:30 a.m. – 6 p.m. seven days a week.

➤ Boat Slip Rental Rates at the Cape Coral Yacht Basin:

- Annual Rate: $9 per foot per month for Cape Coral residents
  $11 per foot per month for non-residents
- Utilities Charge: $35 per month with A/C; $30 per month without A/C
- ** Sign a NEW annual lease and receive one month FREE! **
- Monthly Rate: $12 per foot, plus $35 for utilities
- Daily Rate: $2 per foot daily, plus $3.50 per day for utilities
- * Note: Utility charges include electric and water; Free pump out service available by appointment.

Rosen Park Marina

Rosen Park Marina is the Cape’s newest marina located at the eastern end of SE 15th Terrace on Chantry Canal. This 19-slip marina can accommodate vessels up to 40 feet in length and 13 feet in beam. The marina is part of the new Rosen Park facility, which also includes more than 50 boat trailer parking spaces to accommodate the two, double-wide boat ramps. The area also has restroom facilities and three picnic shelters onsite. Rosen Park boat slip rental rates are $6 per foot, per month plus a utilities charge of $35 per month.

For more information about boat slip rentals and availability, call the Harbormaster at (239) 574-0809.

City Council Starts Review Process with Strategic Planning Session

City Council is starting work immediately to address the issues facing the City of Cape Coral. Through strategic planning, Council and City staff will be examining and discussing key City issues, including the budget, utilities and economic development. The first strategic planning session is scheduled for December 11.

In addition to strategic planning with City Council, City staff will be working on the current City budget to evaluate services and government structure, and try to identify potential cost savings (see article page 16).

“We have an opportunity to take a hard look at how we operate and find opportunities to fundamentally change the way we do business,” said Interim City Manager Carl Schwing. “The economic climate we live in today demands that we start looking at what we do and the value of those services.”

Federal Grant of $5 Million will help with Del Prado Widening

A groundbreaking ceremony was held October 26 for the Del Prado Boulevard Widening Project, Phase 5b. The City applied for and received a grant from Florida Department of Transportation of $5.145 million to offset the $10.4 million in construction costs for this phase.

As part of the City of Cape Coral’s Five-Year Roadway Improvement Program, Del Prado Boulevard is being widened from four to six lanes between Kismet Parkway and Pine Island Road. Phase 5b extends south from Diplomat Parkway to just south of Pine Island Road. The project includes resurfacing and realigning the SR/78 - Pine Island Road intersection, storm drainage, surface water management ponds, traffic signals, landscaping and a 10-foot-wide, multi-use path.

It is anticipated that work will begin in November 2009 and continue through May 2011.
City Putting Neighborhood Stabilization Funds to Work

The City of Cape Coral has been allocated $7 million as part of the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program. The Neighborhood Stabilization Program is administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and provides emergency assistance to state and local governments to acquire and redevelop foreclosed properties. These properties might otherwise become sources of abandonment and blight within their communities.

The program provides grants to every state and certain local communities to purchase foreclosed or abandoned homes and to rehabilitate, resell, or redevelop these homes to stabilize neighborhoods and stem the decline of house values of neighboring homes. The program is authorized under Title III of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008.

There has been $1 million of these funds set aside for the Purchase Assistance Program. This program provides income-eligible clients with 20 percent of the contract price, up to $5,000 in reasonable closing costs, and $2,000 toward Energy Star appliances (if the home does not contain appliances). Since October, eight properties have closed using this program and another 20 were expected to close in November.

Requirements of the program are as follows:

➤ Homes purchased must be existing single-family residences located in the City of Cape Coral (this includes condominiums and townhouses under fee simple ownership).

➤ The home must also be located in a designated Neighborhood Stabilization Program Area of Specified Need (a copy of the map is available at www.capecoralaffordablehousing.com).

➤ Home must be bank owned.

➤ In accordance with NSP guidelines, the purchase price must be at a minimum discount of 1 percent of the appraised value (if the home appraises for $100,000 the sales price must be no more than $99,000).

➤ Buyer must obtain a written property inspection report from a qualified home inspection company prior to the close of escrow (a HUD Housing Quality Standard Form must be completed).

➤ Homes located in the Special Flood Hazard Area are required to maintain flood insurance.

➤ Buyers must not own additional properties and must meet the following income guidelines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>Maximum Income</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$51,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>$90,360</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$96,120</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

➤ Buyers must receive eight hours of first-time homebuyer education from a HUD approved counseling agency.

➤ Buyers must contribute $2,000 of their own funds.

➤ Financing must be in accordance with the City’s Approved Lender Guidelines.

➤ Other requirements and restrictions apply.

Please be advised that all applicants are assisted in a first-come, first-ready basis. If you are interested in additional information or in applying for assistance to purchase a home through the NSP program, please contact Cape Coral Housing Development Corporation at (239) 471-0922 or visit www.capecoralaffordablehousing.com.

Citizens Action Center Continues to Provide Service to Community

The Citizens Action Center is one of the City’s communication links between City government and the residents of Cape Coral. The Citizens Action Center takes informational calls and requests for services, and the staff works to provide exceptional customer service.

The Action Center receives calls/inquiries, which are logged into a computer and tracked until the inquiry is resolved. Oftentimes, the customer service rep will follow up with the resident to ensure the work has been completed.

In FY 2009, the Citizens Action Center received more than 29,000 calls and tracked more than 11,000 inquiries. These calls include all new incoming calls as well as research, direct responses, and follow-up calls to the residents.

The No. 1 inquiry this past year related to code enforcement issues; however, the staff also handled a variety of other calls including streetlight requests, swales, pipes, odors, traffic and road issues, water leaks, hazardous materials, waste management concerns, potholes, licensing/contract issues, canal obstructions and dredging, lot/median mowing, among others.

If you want to know more about the Citizens Action Center, contact the office at 574-0425. In addition to answering questions, staff is available to talk to homeowner associations and groups about the services.

If you have a request, question or would like them to share how they can help the members of your local organization, please call them at 574-0425, and they will be more than happy to assist you. The Citizens Action Center also receives requests via the Internet. Go to the City website (www.capecoral.net) and enter the Citizen Support Center (right column). You can search existing questions, submit questions or request service.
Help Yourself by Helping Others – Parks & Recreation Department Welcomes Volunteers!

The City’s Parks and Recreation Department is looking for volunteers in many of their programs. The benefits of volunteering can lead to improved personal health, skill building and a strong sense of community. Just like regular exercise and a balanced diet, helping others is important to a person’s overall health. More and more, a substantial body of research evidence is indicating that there are very real personal, physical and emotional benefits to volunteering. The University of Michigan studied a group of people for more than a decade, and the results of that study indicated that doing regular volunteer work, more than any other activity, dramatically increased life expectancy.

Across the nation, thousands of volunteers have developed marketable skills and made valuable job contacts through their volunteer efforts. Some areas of frequent skill development are computer skills, public speaking, project and program planning. A community can only be as healthy, vibrant and active as its members are willing to make it. Sharing talents and giving of one’s time and energy for a greater good helps to bring people together. To this extent, volunteerism significantly improves the quality of life for all of us.

If you have a special skill you want to share, enjoy working on special programs and events, have a passion for environmental preservation, or simply want to get more involved in your community, the Cape Coral Parks & Recreation Department has many different volunteer opportunities available throughout the year. If you volunteer, you can request a specific Parks & Recreation facility and specify the type of jobs in which you are interested. You also can determine if you are available to help on a regular or as-needed basis. Prior to being assigned to a duty, all volunteers must undergo training and a mandatory criminal background check.

Here’s how to get started:

1. Visit the Parks and Recreation website and view the volunteer link or visit a facility to apply for preferred volunteer opportunity.
2. Meet with Facility Coordinator with completed application and contact information to discuss volunteer positions.
3. Bring completed packet to Human Resources to begin processing. HR completes background screening and processing, issues badge, and volunteer reports to Facility/Division to begin work schedule.

Put your knowledge, skills and abilities to action in a valuable way by volunteering with Cape Coral Parks & Recreation today. For more information on becoming a volunteer, please call (239) 573-3120.

Second Phase of Public Safety Broadband Wireless System Now in Service

The Information Technology Services, Police and Fire departments have completed the second phase of a program to set up a broadband wireless network covering the entire city. The new wireless network makes use of the 4.9 Gigahertz band, which was set aside by the FCC in 2003 for the exclusive use of public safety at the state and local government levels. Cape Coral is the first government entity in Southwest Florida to use the new technology. The second phase went live in September and covers the Southwest Cape. The first phase covered the Central and Southeast sections of the City.

The wireless network will provide high-speed data connectivity to fire stations, police sub-stations, and the new Mobile Command Center vehicle. Additionally the network will be used to carry video surveillance traffic for the City’s Charter School system. The system can be used for emergency communications in a post-hurricane situation when local phone and telecommunication services are temporarily out of service.

Fire Stations in these zones and the three City Charter Schools are now linked to the public safety data center via high speed wireless channels. The fire stations are interlinked to the dispatch system and the linkage to the schools provides real-time security camera monitoring. Matching grant funds via the federal “Secure Our Schools’ program were used to fund a portion of the project.

Additionally, the broadband wireless system now provides connectivity for the Police Mobile Incident Command vehicle within the entire central and southern portions of the City.

The City plans to go live with the third phase providing coverage in the north during the first calendar quarter of 2010.

Waste Management Encourages Cape Coral Residents to Call Ahead for “White Goods” Pick Up

Waste Management is encouraging Cape Coral residents to call (239) 334-4115 at least 24 hours prior to their regular garbage service day to schedule pick up of special “white goods” including refrigerators, freezers, washers and dryers, dishwashers and air conditioners.

This will help ensure that Waste Management, the City’s licensed vendor, collects and disposes of your white goods correctly and makes it less likely that an unauthorized business or individual picks up your items.

This is especially important for white goods that contain chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) refrigerants such as refrigerators, freezers and air conditioners. CFCs pose a danger to people, pets and the environment if they are not captured and properly recycled. In addition, proper recycling of white goods allows for the reclamation of valuable metals that can be reintroduced into the manufacturing stream.

“Unfortunately, some Cape Coral residents put out their white goods for collection without notifying us first,” said Todd Peres, District Manager for Waste Management’s Gulf Disposal division.

“Before our regular drivers can tag the item and schedule a pick up, unauthorized individuals take the goods.”

If residents call ahead to schedule a pick up, Waste Management can ensure that the white goods are properly handled in an environmentally sensitive manner.
City Council Changes “Citizen Input” at Meetings

The City Council changed the format for Citizen Input at City Council meetings, expanding the time allowed from 30 minutes to 45 minutes. Council also added Citizen Input to the City Council workshops, which typically have not included input due to the fact that workshops are non-voting meetings. The workshop input also will be for 45 minutes, although Council members agreed that those time limits could be expanded with the consent of Council.

CapeTV Contract Renewed with Fewer Services

The City Council approved funding in the FY 2010 budget for continued broadcasting on CapeTV Channel 98 on Comcast. The annual funding amount was reduced to about $98,000, which eliminates the taping studio where City departments recorded their monthly 30-minute programs.

Meetings of the City Council, Charter School Governing Board and Planning and Zoning Committee will continue to be broadcast live and in replay. The monthly Do The Right Thing awards ceremony also will be broadcast live and replayed. The Community Redevelopment Agency meetings are being taped and will be replayed on CapeTV as well. The South Florida Water Management District is providing DVDs of their monthly meetings, and they will be plugged into the lineup for replay.

Meetings that no longer will be aired include the Financial Advisory Committee, Code Compliance hearings and the Audit Committee.

The City has a significant inventory of programming that is subject-specific and will be replayed on CapeTV throughout the year. The channel also is streamed live on the City’s website at www.capecoral.net.

New Traffic Signal Installed on Skyline Boulevard at Mohawk Parkway

Traffic signals are used to assign vehicular and pedestrian rights of way. They are used to promote the orderly movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic and to prevent excessive delay to traffic. Based on a traffic engineering study and sound engineering judgment, the City recommended and pursued the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Skyline Boulevard and Mohawk Parkway. The project started in early 2009 and was completed in November. The cost of the installation is $236,385.

Traffic signals are installed only when the perceived need meets the warrants specified by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. The satisfaction of a warrant is not in itself justification for a signal. A traffic engineering study must be conducted to determine whether the traffic signal should be installed. The installation of a traffic signal requires sound engineering judgment, and must balance the following, sometimes conflicting goals:

➤ Moving traffic in an orderly fashion
➤ Minimizing delay to vehicles and pedestrians
➤ Reducing crash-producing conflicts
➤ Maximizing capacity for each intersection approach

City Council Meetings

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<tr>
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<th>2010 City Council Regular Meetings 4:30 P.M.</th>
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The channel also is streamed live on the City’s website at www.capecoral.net.