

City working with agencies on flu readiness

The H1N1 swine flu is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. It was first detected in the U.S. in April 2009. The virus is spreading from person-to-person worldwide, much in the same that the regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. There are currently H1N1 swine flu cases circulating in Florida. In late June and early July, more than 90 percent of the specimens tested for influenza at the Bureau of Laboratories were positive for H1N1 influenza.

At this point in time, it can be assumed that a person with influenzalike illness has the H1N1 strain, without conducting laboratory testing. Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, along with Department of Health and Human Services announced that healthy adults will require only one dose of the vaccine. The city's fire department has partnered with the Charlotte County Health Department, the lead agency in our emergency response effort, as well as other local and state agencies, to monitor the situation in our area and has pledged its assistance with vaccinations once available. The Florida Department of Health has launched a toll-free hotline, 1-877-352-3581, for public health information and updates on the H1N1 swine flu. Citizens can also visit www.charlottehd.com and www.myFluSafety.com for more information.

I met with Marina Park LLC to discuss marketing efforts for Laishley Park, its amenities and Punta Gorda's attractions. Marketing material is planned to be presented at the Oct. 7 Community Redevelopment Agency meeting.

The city amended its procurement policy, adding Section 23, to incorporate the recently approved local vendor preference for formal sealed bids. If the lowest bidder is from outside Charlotte County, this program allows for county businesses whose bid is within 5 percent of the lowest bid to match or go lower than that lowest bid to receive the award. This new program took effect on Sept. 24 and the first three projects/bids to be evaluated under this program will be the public works/utilities campus general contractor, Shreve/Pompano road improvements and Hendrickson Dam spillway improvements. All three projects are currently out to bid.

The Tax Foundation, a nonprofit research agency, published its 2010 State Business Climate Index as a tool for lawmakers, media and individuals to gauge how their states tax systems compare. The index can also be used to pinpoint specific changes that may increase the competitive standing of a state. Florida ranks as the fifth best state in business climate criteria, which is the same ranking as the previous year. Individual criteria rankings for Florida are corporate tax (15); individual income tax (1); sales tax (32); unemployment insurance tax (3); and property tax (22).

The Charlotte Technical Center has invited the city's IT manager to serve on its electronics technology technical advisory committee. The committee members will serve as a resource to Charlotte Technical Center's faculty in longrange planning for career and technical education. The first meeting is scheduled for Oct. 14, 2009.

The airspace agreement for the Harborwalk floating day docks, which has been signed by the Florida Department of Transportation secretary, has been forwarded to Department of Environmental Protection and Army Corps of Engineers. DEP notified the city that the agreement must also be approved by the Florida Cabinet. Preparations are being made to combine the application with that of the east mooring field as one submission.

The police department enhanced an ongoing program designed to notify parents when their minor children are stopped by police or receive a warning or citation. A new notification card has been developed which informs parents that their child was stopped, the reason for the stop, and what the police action was taken.

Urban design staff met with members of Team Punta Gorda, Charlotte County growth management and the South County Coalition to discuss implementation of the South County Gateway Overlay District proposal process.

The 3rd Annual Harbor Run/Harbor Walk is scheduled for 8 a.m., Nov. 7. Your sponsorship can help produce and promote this healthy, fun event for participants of all ages. Please call MSPG to see how you or your business can benefit from this terrific event.

Howard Kunik
Kunik is the Punta Gorda city manager.