

Sugarmill Woods Civic Association



June 2010
Newsletter

108 Cypress Blvd West
Homosassa, FL 34446
www.sugarmillcivic.org

Citrus Fire Chief to meet with Sugarmill residents



**Wednesday June 23rd, 2010
6:30 - 7:45 p.m.
Sugarmill Woods Country Club**

The Civic Association has scheduled an important Community Outreach Program with local Fire Chief Larry Morabito for Wednesday, June 23 at 6:30 PM at the Sugarmill Woods Country Club.

The Chief will discuss the status and future outlook for Fire Station #18 on Oak Park Boulevard in response to major concerns expressed by some Sugarmill residents. This is the unmanned station that serves Sugarmill Woods and Chassohowitzka. Residents are concerned that the closest fire response team is in Homosassa, suggesting it is too far away to provide a rapid response to a fire or medical emergency.

Chief Morabito acknowledges there has been a reduction in manned stations and equipment due to budget restrictions and other conditions. He has been making a study of the system, which provides protection for the 143,000 residents of Citrus County and will make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners in coming months. One proposal being considered is a new, manned fire station at Highway 19 and W. Cardinal Street.

Citizen input is important. Residents of Sugarmill Woods are urged to attend this meeting to voice their concerns to the Chief and become informed of his plans to meet them.

Elections Supervisor prepares for primary election

Susan Gill, Citrus County Supervisor of Elections, and her staffs are gearing up for the primary election scheduled for Tuesday, August 24. Speaking to a Civic Association Community Outreach Program in May, Gill expects there may be heightened interest among the 97,000 Citrus County registered voters in this primary because of the races for Governor, US Senator and District 5 US Representative to replace Ginny Brown-Waite who has announced her retirement.

Locally, two County Commission seats (Districts 2 and 4), three school board seats (Districts 1, 3 and 5) and the District 43 State Representative position will be on the ballot, which will also present 8 amendments to the state Constitution.

Early voting places include the Homosassa Public Library. Special touch screens and enlarged print machines will be available for disabled voters at the regular voting centers.



2010 Primary Election Dates

July 26 Voter Registration Book Closing Dates
August 9-21 (Mon - Sat) Early Voting Dates
August 24 Primary Election Date

2010 General Election Dates

October 4 Voter Registration Book Closing Dates
October 18-30 (Mon - Sat) Early Voting Dates
November 2 General Election Date



Active hurricane season forecast

With national forecasts of a busy hurricane season in 2010, Citrus County Emergency Management Deputy Director Robert Wesch told a group of Sugarmill Woods residents that his department is in a constant state of preparation and urged citizens to be ready, too.



Having a family plan (where to go if evacuated) and a disaster kit are two vital actions that should be completed now. Supplies of food, water, medicines, batteries, a battery operated weather radio, a full gas tank and an extra supply of cash are among the list of "musts".

Speaking at a recent Civic Association Community Outreach meeting, Wesch pleaded with residents to obey any evacuation order, "sooner rather than later". He advised that even if your home is high and dry, areas around you are likely to be flooded preventing access to outside areas and delaying assistance from emergency personnel. And he warned that area highways will be jammed with residents coming from the south, so have a plan to evacuate and do it promptly.

Disaster reentry passes, available at the Sheriff substation on Highway 19, should be in the glove compartment, ready to be hung on the rear view mirror to facilitate a return home after the area is cleared.

Wesch warned that no 100 percent, perfect plan can be conceived, but obvious safeguards can be crucial and about hurricane forecasts he added: "If we have one hurricane hit us, it will be a lousy hurricane season."

Sugarmill residents donate to the We Care Food Pantry Program



Girl Scout Troop 610 members Cheyenne Reedy & Alexa Ivanyi help "Fill Up the Truck" during a May food drive for the We Care Pantry operated by the Homosassa Civic Club. On a Saturday morning in May, Sugarmill Woods residents drove to the country club parking lot to drop off 7,000 pounds donations of food and household supplies. Mary Lee Johnson, who chaired the drive, reported cash contributions of \$2500, which included \$1,000 gifts from both the Civic Association and the Women of Sugarmill Woods. Because of the success of this drive, it will become an annual event".

Five Country Commissioners Appeared in Sugarmill Woods recently

The Civic Association, which sponsors a series of Community Outreach Programs every year, completed its goal of presenting all the members of the Citrus County Board of County Commissioners with the appearance of Commissioner Dennis Damato in April. Though each Commissioner represents a specific district, all are elected by the entire county electorate.

Damato was upbeat in his appraisal of commission activities in the last year, in part because of a more collegial relationship on the Board and improved cooperation between the county and the cities of Inverness and Crystal River. He cited his appreciation for federal grants that cleaned up water and sewer problems in Chassahowitzka and paid for the completion of numerous road projects.

Damato praised the work of the Sheriff's Office "for staying ahead of crime in the county" while acknowledging that keeping the county safe is a costly proposition. He praised the \$1.2 billion upgrade by Progress Energy because of the significant boost it will bring to the county tax base. And, echoing the comments of each of the other commissioners, he reported that dealing with budget issues in the recent economy has been difficult, but he assured residents that, in his opinion, the county is spending its revenues prudently.

CERT Chief echoes plea to be prepared



CERT Coordinator Gerry Brummer made a telling point when he spoke to Sugarmill Woods residents recently. "Every grocery store, drug store, bank, gas station, the Post Office and the Sheriff substation in this area are in the flood plain."

That's reason enough to be prepared with an ample supply of food, water, medicine and cash during hurricane season. Beyond that, Brummer pointed out that the state of Florida is in a year-round storm season. Tornadoes, tropical depressions, fires and other disasters do not respect seasons as he reminded that the worst storm in Citrus Count in recent years, the "no name storm" happened in March, 1993. It's prudent to have a plan and supplies all year.

The Sugarmill Woods CERT volunteers, numbering about 100, are trained to be first responders in the event of a disaster and are equipped with amateur radios to remain in contact with one another and the Emergency Operations Center.

Volunteers are welcome. For more information, visit the web site: www.smwcert.org or call Brummer at 382-4446.



Sheriff Dawsy reports low crime rate in Sugarmill Woods

Speaking at a Civic Association Community Outreach Program in April, Citrus County Sheriff Jeff Dawsy told residents that the county crime rate is the second lowest in the state of Florida and Sugarmill Woods is one of the safest communities in the county.

Only 10 crimes were reported here in the first quarter, mainly home and car burglaries. He issued his recurring plea: keep doors and windows locked and do not leave keys in vehicle ignitions.

Dawsy admitted that his budget "always comes under fire" but it supports his philosophy of being prepared for the "worst case scenario". And he reported that his department is meeting its duties with fewer deputies than were employed when he took office in 1997.



One possible victim of his next budget could be the Sheriff sub-station on Highway 19, across from the Sugarmill entrance. He grants the office provides service and presence in the southwest corner of the county, but could very well be on the "chopping block" as he tries to meet his obligations next year.

Dawsy, elected in 1996, is serving in second year of his fourth term and has said he intends to retire from office at the end of this term.

Richard Byrnes, President of the Sugarmill Woods Crime Watch, followed Sheriff Dawsy to explain that volunteer drivers spent more than 3800 man-hours covering the patrol of 40,000 miles of residential streets in 2009. The 100 drivers rotate two-hour shifts checking for unusual activities, which they report to the Sheriff's Office. They make house checks for absent residents if a request is made by calling 726-5388. They do not make arrests, direct traffic or issue water use violations.

Prospective volunteer drivers may contact Byrnes for more details at 382-5388.

Water Management Workshop attracts homeowners

The Civic Association annual workshop on water conservation in April gave Sugarmill Woods residents an opportunity to ask questions and receive advice on how to save water indoors and irrigate their lawns wisely during the year. Rivard Reding, from the Southwest Water Management District (SWIFTMUD), had a simple piece of advice about when to water the lawn: "only when it needs it!" "Efficient" watering is the key to a healthy lawn. The agency advises that, during the summer months, yards need only 3/4" of water every 3 to 5 days and adds that normal amounts of rainfall usually provide that. If the lawn shows signs of stress, water it, but only on the assigned day and time.



Civic Association/Women of Sugarmill Woods combined gift to library

Two Sugarmill Woods organizations made a combined gift to support the Homosassa Public Library. Each group made \$500.00 contributions at a meeting in May.



From left to right: Civic Association Board member Franscesca Paar, Kathy Wolf, Homosassa Library, Joyce Rasmussen, President of the Women of Sugarmill Woods and Pat O'Brien, WSW Director of Community Services.

This Newsletter is published by the Sugarmill Woods Civic Association as a community service to all residents of Sugarmill Woods.

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Message from the President

For those of you new to the community and we know there are many, we want to welcome you to Sugarmill Woods. I hope you received a new 2010 Sugarmill Woods Directory of Residents. If you are not listed in the Directory and wish to be and / or you are not a member of the Sugarmill Woods Civic Association and would like to join, please let us know by filling out the Enumeration / Membership Application Card in the front of the book. In addition to this quarterly Newsletter, the Civic Association also publishes Sugarmill Woods Bulletins frequently to inform you about items of importance to all of us that may affect or impact us as a community. If you are not on the distribution list for the Sugarmill Woods Bulletins and wish to be added, please send an email to DuaneDueker@aol.com.



Recently we have seen a continued decrease in attendance at our Community Outreach Program meetings. These meetings are sponsored by your Civic Association to bring important leaders of government, the community, and other selected speakers here to Sugarmill Woods to make it convenient for you to meet them, understand their position on key issues and concerns affecting our community, and ask them questions so you can be better informed. Please take time to read about some of the recent meetings which are featured in this newsletter. We have another one scheduled on Wednesday June 23 to address a very important subject - Citrus County Fire Rescue Operations and Station # 18 in Sugarmill Woods. I encourage you attend. We need to have a better attendance at these meetings if we are going to continue them and get the appropriate level of speakers to come.

With the summer season here, many of our residents may be doing more walking and riding bicycles in the early morning and late evening hours. Please remember some basic rules of the road. If you are driving, please adhere to the speed limits and look out for walkers and bicyclists. Provide ample space when driving around them. If you are walking, please remember the roads are intended for vehicles. Always walk on the left side of the road or shoulder "facing" the vehicles approaching from the opposite direction. If you are biking, you must obey the same laws as motor vehicles; stop at stop signs, no passing on the right, etc. Bicyclists should always ride on the right hand side of the road "with" the flow of traffic. Please remember that bicycles are no match against vehicles so be careful and safe. Please remember "Your Safety is Your Responsibility" and enjoy the summer.

*Thank you,
Duane Dueker*