

County distributes backpacks for homeless veterans

By Hector Flores

Charlotte County Commission Chairman Bill Truex, county administration, Human Services Department staff, Charlotte County Sheriff's Office deputies and officials from more than a dozen county nonprofit partners held a "Bags for the Brave" backpack giveaway Tuesday at the Family Services Center in Port Charlotte.

The backpacks were donated by the health insurance company United Healthcare and filled with personal care items donated by vendors at and sponsors of the 2023 Florida Association of Counties annual conference in June, when Truex was inducted as president of the association's board of directors. The backpacks will be distributed by the Veteran Services Division and partner nonprofits to veterans who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

"We're doubly blessed in Charlotte County to be home to more than 20,000 veterans who served our country bravely and honorably and also by the amazing organizations dedicated to making sure those veterans get the benefits they deserve and assistance when they need it," Truex said.

Nonprofits and agencies participating in the Bags for the Brave backpack initiative include CareerSource Southwest Florida, Charlotte Behavioral Healthcare - Project Hope, the Charlotte County Homeless Coalition, Charlotte County Veterans Council, Disabled American Veterans Chapter 82, Florida Department of Health, Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida, Goodwill Manasota, Gulf Coast Partnership, Jesus Loves You Ministry, Jewish Family and Children Services, Peace River Community Housing Partners, Punta Gorda Farmer's Market, St. Vincent de Paul and Veterans Village - Volunteers of America. The Charlotte County Sheriff's Office and the Charlotte County Veterans Services Division will also be distributing backpacks.

If you or someone you know is a veteran experiencing homelessness or is in danger of becoming homeless, please reach out to these organizations or agencies for assistance. To speak to a veteran service officer, call 941-764-5579. Appointments are required for visits to our two office locations at 1050 Loveland Blvd., in Port Charlotte or 6868 San Casa Drive, Unit 12 in Englewood.

TRIM notices

Charlotte County property owners will soon be receiving TRIM notices from the Property Appraiser. TRIM stands for the State of Florida's Truth in Millage Act. TRIM notices inform taxpayers which governmental entity is responsible for the taxes levied and the amount of tax liability taxpayers may owe to each taxing authority. The property appraiser sends this information, known as the TRIM notice, to the property owner.

TRIM notices reflect the maximum tax rate that can be levied on a property. It is not a tax bill. The actual millage rate is set by the County Commission at its September budget public hearings. For example, the County Commission set a maximum rate for the Charlotte County Fire Rescue MSBU, but has publicly indicated it does not intend to set the millage at the maximum rate.

County Commission budget public hearings are set for 5:01 p.m., Sept. 7 and 19 at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center, 75 Taylor Road, Punta Gorda.

Staff and consultants provided the commission with information about Fire & EMS operations and budgetary considerations at a workshop on March 21, 2023. That information will be factored into the millage rate the board will consider for the Charlotte County Fire Rescue MSBU. The video may be viewed on the county website.

Visit www.tinyurl.com/FireEMSWorkshop. To view the consultant's standards of coverage study, visit www.tinyurl.com/FIRE-EMSstudy.

For information about property tax valuations and TRIM notices, visit www.ccappraiser.com. For information about MSBUs, call 941-743-1914 or from Englewood area call 941-681-3770.

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