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Englewood **Our Town**

Friday, July 11, 1997 Editor: Chris Porter 474-5521

Sun Herald

Winchester gets a push

Sarasota, Charlotte boards agree to work for extension of boulevard to River Road

By **STEVE REILLY**
Staff Writer

Englewood's Winchester Boulevard will stretch toward River Road.

At a joint meeting Thursday, Sarasota and Charlotte County commissioners decided to work together to see the road built from the Sarasota-Charlotte county line to River Road.

Besides traffic circulation, the proposed road has special significance for Englewood East and other West Charlotte residents for hurricane evacuation from the Cape Haze peninsula.

Winchester Boulevard, however, has remained more of a concept than a road for more than two decades since more than 2 miles of the alignment is in Sarasota County.

As a sign of its commitment, the Sarasota County board voted Thursday to have its transportation staff look for the money that will pay for the road's design for an estimated cost between \$500,000 and \$1 million.

Sarasota County Transportation Director John Goodknight already had proposed — and the two commissions agreed — to ask the Florida Department of Transportation to add an "Englewood Interstate Connector" to its highway system.

The plan is to present the state several alignments, including an extension of Pine Street to North River Road and the extension of Winchester with River Road improvements. FDOT then would chose the alignment that would fit its criteria.

While the particular alignment would

not be identified, Goodknight said, in the state road system, the road would qualify for federal transportation funds and would give Englewood a direct route to Interstate 75.

Goodknight also told commissioners an Englewood connector would meet the requirements of the state system.

However, Sarasota County Commissioners Shannon Staub and David Mills did not feel the counties should put the fate of Winchester in the hands of the state.

The Sarasota County commissioners also learned from Charlotte County Assistant Administrator Chuck Evans that 90 percent of the design for the road is completed south of the county line. That is where Charlotte County's investment stopped.

"No construction was to start," Evans said. "The feelings of the board, were that they didn't want to be put in the position of building a road that ended no place."

While supporting finding the money for the road's design, Staub made it clear that her county would not want to bear all the construction costs. She threw out the suggestion that Charlotte County build the road and Sarasota maintain it.

The right of way between the county line and River Road, and land for fill and to offset environmental impacts, are already in Sarasota County's hands.

Charlotte County commissioners did not jump at Staub's suggestion, but Commissioner Mac Horton made it

Please see ROAD, page 8

★ ROAD From page 1

clear he would push for his board's financial commitment to the project. He said he saw Charlotte County committing a portion of the future gas tax revenues to the project.

The two boards tossed around several other ideas, including a special taxing district that might include the Lee County residents living in Boca Grande.

The two boards also directed their staffs to work out the nuts and bolts of an agreement. In six months, the commissioners plan to meet again.

"It's just a question to what extent," Charlotte County Chairman Matt DeBoer said, believing his board would support the project but only after staff defines the county's percentage of the costs based on population and benefit.

"It will be scientifically based," DeBoer added.

Sarasota Herald-Examiner
May 1997

Shelter from a storm?

Experts evaluating Charlotte County's hurricane shelters are confirming what local officials already know: Few places in the county won't be affected by rising water during a medium-strength hurricane.

Most roads and evacuation routes in Charlotte flood during heavy rains; a hurricane will only exacerbate these "normal" conditions.

Department of Community Affairs experts are evaluating 17 Red Cross-designated shelters — all schools — to see if they would be suitable for use during hurricanes. The team may recommend upgrading some facilities or taking others off the list because they're in a flood zone.

Hurricane season begins June 1. Southwest Florida has escaped the brunt of hurricanes in recent years but

unexpected heavy rains in 1995 closed Interstate 75 in parts of Charlotte County, washed out roads and bridges and flooded neighborhoods.

Attracted by the ambience of waterfront living, most of Florida's population has settled along the coast. Government has generally not discouraged construction and development in the flood plain and on the barrier islands. As a result, hundreds of thousands of people are vulnerable.

The state survey will give Charlotte County residents a better idea of what shelters, if any, will provide safety in a hurricane. But this much is already known: There won't be enough room in shelters for everyone who will need to flee rising waters in a hurricane. Individual hurricane plans are essential and they should be developed now, not when hurricane warnings are posted.

Englewood Our Town

INSIDE:

Charlotte High students experience a renaissance

— Christine

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Tuesday, March 17, 1998

Editor: Chris Porter 474-5521

Sun Herald

<http://www.charlotte-florida.com>

Our Town Page 1

*From acorns,
mighty oaks grow*

I was very fortunate the past two weekends here in Englewood. Two ideas grew into two of the best-attended events here in quite awhile. Both events were also in their inaugural years. Lemon Bay Sunrise Rotary Club's Spring Fever and the Englewood *Sun Herald's* Fishing Expo.



**LANG
CAPASSO**

General Manager

Both events had many things in common. They filled a need, were a lot of fun, got people involved, were well-attended and

Horton: D-day for route

Hurricane evacuation funding may hinge on legislature action

By **STEVE REILLY**
Staff Writer

This week may be a do or die week for state funding for Englewood's hurricane evacuation, said Charlotte County Commissioner Mac Horton Monday.

Speaking before the West Charlotte Civic Association, Horton stressed that this week will be critical in the Florida Legislature for the \$4.6 million he hopes to get for hurricane evacuation in Englewood and West Charlotte.

State legislators are now hammering out the state budget. In the senate, Sen.



HORTON

legislators, neighboring counties and other agencies — as well as residents and

Katherine Harris, R-Sarasota, has introduced a budget amendment for the funding, while Rep. Dave Bitner, R-Port Charlotte, tacked on a similar amendment to the House's proposed budget, Horton said.

Horton took the lead to line up the local state



HARRIS

on getting the bulk of the money as part of the federal transportation bill, with U.S.

civic groups — to push for the funding.

The state funding is just one piece of a funding puzzle both Sarasota and Charlotte counties are putting together to fund a \$60-million Englewood Interstate Connector. Sarasota County has been focusing its efforts

Rep. Dan Miller, R Bradenton, as the point man.

The two counties have also agreed in principal to finance the construction of Winchester Boulevard from north of State Road 776 in Charlotte to River Road in Sarasota.

While the Manatee-Sarasota and Charlotte-Punta Gorda metropolitan planning organizations have designated funding to Winchester's construction, Horton pointed out to state legislators how the

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Englewood Our Town

Friday, March 20, 1998

Editor: Chris Porter 474-5521

Sun  Herald

<http://www.charlotte-florida.com>

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INSIDE:

Englewood shines with "really big shows"

—Micki D'Amico, page 2



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Animosity level rises in Rotonda

There's nothing like a meeting of the board of directors of the Rotonda West Association to get your share of tension and animosity for the week.



Take Thursday's get-together. Board president Duke Coyne couldn't make the meeting.

Englewood citizens angry about Winchester funding

Residents blast Rep. Bitner

By STEVE REILLY
Staff Writer

With state funding for Winchester Boulevard hanging by a thread in Tallahassee, disappointment can be heard in Englewood.

Rep. Dave Bitner, R-Port

Charlotte, and Rep. Greg Gay, R-Cape Coral, were unable to get a state House budget amendment that would have asked for \$46 million for Winchester Boulevard.

Sen. Katherine Harris, R-Sarasota, was able to get a line item on the Senate version of the budget.

To many Englewood citizens, Winchester Boulevard is consid-

ered a vital link for the hurricane evacuation needs of Englewood and Cape Haze.

Hope now hinges on Harris' funding request surviving the joint House-Senate committee that will deliberate on a final budget. The decision could come as early as next week when the Senate and House reconcile the two budgets.

"It's a shame our (state) repre-

sentatives have no weight in Tallahassee," said Dorian Popescu, president of the Englewood Area Chamber of Commerce. "It's not our local representatives. They did their part, way beyond what is expected of them."

In 1996, Popescu led a chamber meeting to impress upon Bitner and Gay how some state funding would be needed to help

finance Winchester and other road projects for hurricane evacuation.

Popescu recalled Thursday how Bitner and Gay said Sarasota and Charlotte counties needed to coordinate their efforts first. Cooperation between the two counties has been a stumbling block to getting the project under way.

Please see BITNER, page 8

POLICE BEAT

Community agencies need assistance

From page 1

report from the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office.

The suspect entered the victim's bedroom, pinned her arms to the bed and sexually assaulted her. He then left the residence, direction unknown.

The victim was not injured during the attack, according to reports.

The suspect, a white male in his late teens or early 20s, was described by the victim as being approximately 5-foot-10 and 140 pounds, and having red hair, shaved on the sides.

The Sheriff's Office Major Crimes Unit is currently investigating the case.

Middle school student charged

Police charged Paul Loyd,

By RENEÉ LePERE
Staff Writer

For the first time in 15 years, Kathy Roach, the director of Helping Hand in Englewood is doing something she's never had to do — ask the community for monetary help.

"We are overwhelmed with requests for financial aid," Roach said at Thursday's meeting of the Englewood Interagency Council.

"In the past two weeks, we've turned on the electricity for two elderly women, and for the first time in 15 years, I'm telling people we don't have the money to help."

Helping Hand is a community-supported social service agency that provides short-term emergency assistance to Englewood families, such as rent/mortgage assistance, past-due utility bills, prescription medication as well as food.

"Food is not the problem right now," Roach said. "I'm in need of support before the season is over and a lot of residents go home. The problem is going to get worse over the summer, when there is a lot of job loss."

"We need to take care of the legitimate needs of residents due to sickness or unemployment. This is a real need. I'm not panicking."

Helping Hand also acts as the

clearinghouse for families needing assistance during the holidays. Many area charitable organizations like Toys for Tots and Sheriff's Office Adopt-a-Family programs contact Roach to get in touch with eligible families.

Anyone interested in helping Helping Hand should call Roach at 474-5864 between 10 a.m. and noon. Donations may also be dropped off at the Helping Hand building in the

west end of the parking lot of Englewood United Methodist Church, 700 E. Dearborn St.

Meals on Wheels, a service that cooks and delivers meals to shut-ins, is in need of drivers. Anyone interested in driving or helping prepare meals should call 474-4445 or visit the Meals on Wheels headquarters at 400 Loma Linda Road behind Community Presbyterian Church, between 9 a.m. and noon weekdays.

★ BITNER

From page 1

The ultimate hope is to run Winchester Boulevard north from Charlotte County Road 775 in the Rotonda area to River Road in Sarasota County. The entire Winchester project is expected to cost \$20 million.

When the counties had their "ducks in a row," Popescu said the

two state legislators committed themselves to finding state dollars for the project.

Popescu did commend Harris for "doing her job" and keeping her promise to the Englewood community.

Charlotte County Commissioner Mac Horton and Sarasota County Commissioner Shannon Staub have worked to overcome the difficulties with the county line. Horton also had

sought state funding to help speed up the road project.

The chamber hasn't completely given up on the state funding. The chamber has sent letters to Sen. Donald Sullivan, R-Seminole, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. Harris' and Bitner's offices described Sullivan as influential on what will be included in the state budget.

Englewood East resident Jack Donkel also remembered similar

promises made by Bitner and Gay to the Charlotte County Taxpayers League. Recalling those promises to the community, Donkel asked what the two legislators had done to earn Englewood's political support.

"I'm very disappointed," Donkel said. "It's the final hour, right?"

Claudia Ridge is another Englewood resident who has worked hard to support the Winchester effort. She is among

several citizens who said they felt Bitner, more so than Gay, "dropped the ball."

"We've done on the county level what we've needed to do," Ridge said. "Everyone has worked their buns off from the commissioners on down."

Ridge said she saw Bitner's failure to get an amendment on the House budget as a slap in the faces of the two county commissioners.

"He was not the type of person

WINCHESTER CORRIDOR

Road project dealt big blow

Money for the Winchester Boulevard plan won't be in the House version of the state budget.

By Bryan Long
STAFF WRITER

A political promise is on the line for Charlotte County Commissioner Mac Horton. But he can do little more than watch and wait as state legislators decide the fate of a Cape Haze hurricane evacuation route.

For months Horton pressed state lawmakers to budget \$4.6 million for a Winchester corridor construction project. But Wednesday afternoon he learned that the money made it only half way; funding for the project won't make it into the House version of the state budget.

"That's not good," Horton said. "That was the whole plan from day one to get it into both budgets."

The news came days after Sen. Katherine Harris, R-Sarasota, succeeded in having money placed in the Senate version of the budget.

"Katherine got her job done and it didn't happen on the other side," Horton said.

Rep. Dave Bitner, R-Port Charlotte, and Rep. Greg Gay, R-Cape Coral, emerged Wednesday from a

meeting with house speaker Daniel Webster saying funding for Winchester Boulevard will not be brought before the House for a vote. But Bitner and Gay said the project is not dead.

"Personally, I'd rather try to get the votes in conference because then you're down to just a couple of members as opposed to 61," Gay said.

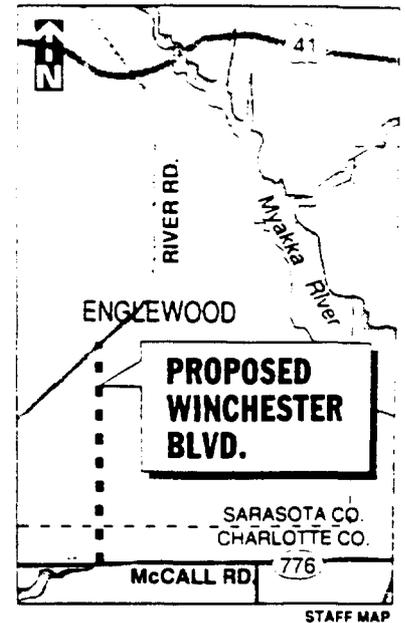
The decision on whether to include the \$4.6 million in funding will be settled by a joint House-Senate committee, which looks at each budget item the two chambers couldn't agree on.

Gay said Webster indicated that they were in pretty good shape for getting Winchester funded, but added, "Obviously, it's not guaranteed."

Plans call for engineering to begin on the evacuation route in 2003, but Horton was hoping to broker a deal that would allow the Charlotte County portion to begin immediately. That could move the completion date from 2010 up to 2003.

"It's a pay me now or pay me later issue," said Ben McKay, Harris' senior aide. "And what happens if between 2003 and 2010 you have a major hurricane hit Charlotte County and you have 100,000 people stranded on the roads?"

Horton has put in months of legwork including numerous meetings with Harris, Bitner and Gay. He also



STAFF MAP

has made a promise to his constituents in Englewood, Rotonda, Grove City and other Cape Haze communities.

In July, when he proposed to speed up construction, Horton said the plan could cost him his political career.

"I'll give it my best shot and if we're successful, great. If not, well, there's life after being a county commissioner," he said during a meeting with evacuation route loyalists.

If the money is made available, an interstate connector would still be decades away for Englewood.

"This is the first leg of a massive project that could cost 60 to 65 million dollars," Horton said.

The Winchester corridor could cost up to \$20 million and would provide a second intersection for traffic to access two-lane River Road, which runs to Exit 34 on Interstate 75.

Englewood at work: a tale of two counties

In the early part of the 20th century, the port authority in New York City was in danger. The problem was that the port operated between two state lines — the piers lay on the New York side and the rails on the New Jersey side — as the two states competed against each other, rather than working hand in hand to get the job done. Bob Foote, an Englewood resident living in Boca Royale, worked as a transportation engineer on the port after it was incorporated as a bi-state port in 1921, and saw how much better business became after the two states joined forces.

Foote sees a parallel between that port and the problems of governance in Englewood. He would like to see Englewood incorporated as its own city, or at least have an integrative coalition



**Kevin
Kelly**

Englewood Herald Editor

of Englewood business owners and homeowners extending across Sarasota and Charlotte county lines. He even has a name for the proposed alliance — Greater Englewood Council of Home and Business Owners (GEC)— and has presented the idea to the Englewood Area Chamber of Commerce, where he is a member of the transportation department.

“There’s no group that is

looking at Englewood in a unified way,” said Foote, a retired professional in the field of city planning. “Our decisions are made by five commissioners in Sarasota and five in Charlotte, and those are big counties.”

Foote moved to Englewood in 1995. In January, 1997, he attended a meeting dealing with the Wilbur Smith report, a study of South County traffic circulation and evacuation alternatives. When he saw how poorly this issue was being treated, he decided to get involved. By that time, the Chamber and other organizations had favored the extension of Pine Street to Interstate 75 for close to 10 years. The Corps of Engineers had also done a study on evacuation routes and found Pine Street preferable to the

Winchester extension.

“Everybody says (extend) Pine Street, but why don’t commissioners say go ahead? So I’ve been getting antsy,” Foote said. An example of the problem, as he sees it, is that the Winchester extension (on the Charlotte County side) had the backing of Commissioner Mac Horton, but that level of enthusiasm was not matched by Sarasota County Commissioner Shannon Staub in reference to the Pine Street extension. Hence, the need for a bi-county organization that can look into planning and zoning issues and present its findings to both commissions.

Foote also points to the recent meeting on alternative uses for Buchan Airport by the Englewood Citizens Advisory Committee as another manifestation of the

need for incorporation. First of all, he said, that the CAC was not consulted by commissioners before they decided to close the field indicated a problem of representation. Also, while Foote said he favors keeping the airfield as is, he viewed a suggestion at the meeting that Elsie Quirk Library relocate on the field as potentially devastating to Dearborn Street revitalization. When the post office was moved off Dearborn, less traffic moved through the area. Foote sees the same thing in store if the library leaves the area.

“The purpose (of GEC) is as a bridge between where we are now and where we’ll be as a bi-county,” he said.

For more information on GEC, contact Bob Foote via e-mail at: bobfoote@ewol.com

Sarasota Herald Trib.

3/7/98

A two-way street

Cape Haze residents seeking to evacuate coastal Charlotte County in the event of a hurricane may be delayed by another storm they can't control — political friction between Sarasota County and North Port.

Sarasota County Commissioner Shannon Staub recently sought the North Port City Commission's endorsement of a resolution. The resolution seeks state Department of Transportation funding for the extension of Winchester Boulevard, from Englewood to Interstate 75, as a hurricane-evacuation route. That extension, according to one plan, would proceed over an elevated, widened South River Road, part of which traverses the city as it passes through the Myakka State Forest.

North Port commissioners, apparently miffed that neither Sarasota nor Charlotte county officials previously had discussed the project with them, thanked Staub for her presentation, but made their comments after she left, panning the proposal during a workshop closed to public discussion.

"Two counties got together and we have been totally out of the loop," said

City Commissioner George Mullen.

The City Commission should be interested in many aspects of the proposed project, including its impact on the city's comprehensive plan, traffic circulation and emergency services. It should have been consulted as Charlotte and Sarasota counties developed plans. But the City Commission should have addressed those concerns while Staub was present to respond. The city will win few friends if it takes a parochial perspective of what "others" plan for "its" road.

Everyone living south of the intersection of River Road and I-75, from Snook Haven to Boca Grande, shares a common concern — how to evacuate in the event of a hurricane.

It behooves everyone in that region who needs to flee a storm to have an adequate route to high ground. During the remainder of the year, an improved River Road-Winchester Boulevard thoroughfare would enhance daily traffic to the benefit of both Englewood-area and North Port residents. Everyone involved in using that thoroughfare needs to be involved. Politics, like roads, should be a two-way street.

O Engle W

Friday, April 10, 1998

Editor: Chris Porter

Just a note of thanks

Folks around these parts have shown a healthy interest in their federal and state governments this spring.



CHRIS PORTER

Editor

People who normally wouldn't follow federal transportation bills and state budgets very closely are scanning the papers each day, looking for any bit of news from Washington or Tallahassee, as if there were some pennant race going on.

Then again, the stakes are pretty high. And the politicians are hearing about it, too.

I'm talking about the proposed Winchester Extension, also known as the Englewood Interstate Connector, the Emergency Evacuation Route and The Myakka State Forest Four-Lane Nature Trail. I'll just call it The Road.

In Washington, the battle was to get The Road on the federal transportation budget, despite having a U.S. representative from this area — Dan Miller — who doesn't necessarily like funding projects like The Road with that kind of money.

The federal package passed without Miller's vote, so the political magnifying glass has swung over to Tallahassee, where our legislators are working to get money for The Road on the state budget.

Here at home, Charlotte County Commissioner Mac Horton and his counterpart, Commissioner Shannon Staub of Sarasota County, have been doing all they can to get the state and federal lawmakers on the right track.

To back this up, I have included the complete contents of a memo sent this week by Horton to State Rep. Dave Bitner, R-Port Charlotte, the senior member of our state legislative delegation:

"Re: THANK YOU!

"I know that the political winds blow hotter in Englewood, Charlotte County, than anywhere else in this state! I want to thank you for your efforts thus far on behalf of the \$4.6 million for the Winchester project. I know how long you have labored and how close we are. Please do not give up the cause. I am praying for your success. Many lives will be affected by this decision."

Well put, Mac. It's always a good idea to thank someone for something you hope they'll do, while letting them know you really, really hope they'll do it. It's an incentive with only an implied measure of pressure.

Bitner has been taking a lot of the heat on The Road being left off the state House budget at the beginning of the budget process. Admittedly, a lot of that heat has been from his constituents, who have been quoted in this paper. What this shows to me is their seriousness to get this done.

By all reports, Bitner and state Rep. Greg Gay — whose district includes the path of The Road — have been working frantically for the past few weeks to get this thing going.

By contrast, state Sen. Katherine

Please see CHRIS, page 8

★ CHRIS

From page 1

Harris, R-Sarasota, was able to get The Road on the Senate version of the budget. That was cool.

Of course, the hope is to get The Road on the budget that will eventually be sent to and signed by Gov. Lawton Chiles.

So I guess it would be appropriate for me, as a taxpaying resident of Englewood East and a voter, at this time, to thank personally each and every one of our lawmakers — Ms. Harris, Mr. Bitner, Mr. Gay, Mr. Chiles and Mr. Miller, as well as Mr. Horton and Ms. Staub — for doing all they possibly can to get The Road built. We would really appreciate it.

Really.

D

Exhibit 1(d)

Weather radio faces delay

One company makes
the necessary
transmitter approved
by the Weather Service.

By Bebe Bahnsen
STAFF WRITER

The fast-track effort to make weather radios work effectively in all parts of Sarasota, Charlotte and DeSoto counties faces a potentially major slowdown.

It could take six months for the necessary transmitter to be delivered.

The reason: One company, Independent Technology Inc., makes transmitters approved by the National Weather Service.

Company president Melvin Stiles, who said the Weather Service is his only client, explained that manufacturing the transmitters is a sideline. Most of his business involves maintaining existing transmitters under a government contract.

He said his Scottsville, N.Y., company makes the transmitters because he doesn't want to refuse the Weather Service. The delay, Stiles explained, is not a lack of inventory, but the company's policy of making the transmitters one at a time.

"We build it to order, in essence. We do not have off-the-shelf products," Stiles said.

Venice police Chief Joe Slapp and retired U.S. Weather Service meteorologist Bill Kennedy have spearheaded the effort to have a transmitter installed to broadcast weather warnings to parts of south Sarasota County, north Charlotte County and west DeSoto County. Those areas are out of reach of Weather Service transmitters in Ruskin and Fort Myers.

Slapp finds the potential delay to be, at best, ludicrous.

"I find it hard to believe that there may not be a transmitter intact somewhere in this country," Slapp said, noting that the government is

Weather radio service may be delayed

RADIO FROM 1B

closing many military bases that might have had similar transmitters.

Nokomis resident Robert Gunther, whose company, High Point Tower Technology Inc., owns and manages more than 225 tower and rooftop antenna locations nationwide, agrees.

Gunther said he was certain that his technical experts could quickly come up with a transmitter to meet all Weather Service requirements — if the agency would allow such a transmitter to be used until the approved one could be installed.

Weather Service officials could not be reached for comment on whether they would allow such a transmitter.

Gunther, whose company has offices in Oldsmar and Staten Island, N.Y., also offered to purchase a generator for the project, if needed. He has volunteered free space for the transmitter on a 500-foot-tall tower his company owns on Border Road near Interstate 75.

"It's a substantial commitment for a long period of time, and I hope we can do it for the community," he

"It's a substantial commitment for a long period of time, and I hope we can do it for the community. I've got our technical guru on alert."

ROBERT GUNTHER, whose company, High Point Tower Technology Inc., owns and manages more than 225 tower and rooftop antenna locations nationwide

said. "I've got our technical guru on alert."

Weather Service technical experts this week will visit both Gunther's tower site and a 200-foot-tall tower owned by Sarasota County on Center Road in Venice, and then recommend the best location for a transmitter.

If Weather Service officials approve his site, Gunther said, there would be little or no delay before the transmitter could be installed.

Sarasota County Emergency Management Director Gregg Feagans said the Center Road site would need some improvements. The 200-foot-tall tower, he explained, would need to be heightened, which could take several

weeks or months because of a county tower moratorium and neighborhood objections.

If those problems were overcome, Feagans said, the tower height could quickly be increased.

"That site has got the steel to go to 300 feet that's laying on the ground right now," he said.

In the meantime, efforts to raise about \$80,000 to install the transmitter are under way. Kennedy said those efforts should be accelerated if getting the transmitter will take several months.

"If we're going to have to wait four to six months, let's get the money and place the order now," he said.

County Commissioner Shannon

Staub had planned to ask her colleagues to approve funds for the project out of the county's contingency budget, perhaps this week. But the request will be delayed because Feagans, Slapp and Weather Service officials were still working out the details.

"Once we get the firm cost numbers, we'll make a presentation to the County Commission," Feagans said.

The City of Venice and Venice Foundation officials are waiting for the same information before making financial commitments.

Kennedy believes that quick action in securing funds for the project, and the Weather Service's cooperation in allowing a temporary transmitter to be installed, could save lives.

Recent bad weather and projections that El Nino could continue to bring harsh storms have prompted calls for a transmitter to reach the rest of Southwest Florida.

"What I'm looking at now is, with the El Nino effect still out there, and the water warming up, that could give us a stormy spring and early summer," Kennedy said.

County to aid in weather warning

Partial funding is approved for a radio transmitter that will serve an area that covers parts of three counties.

By Bebe Bahnsen
STAFF WRITER

Acting on a motion by Commissioner Shannon Staub, the Sarasota County Commission voted unanimously Tuesday to help pay for a transmitter that would allow severe weather warnings broadcast from the National Weather Service station in Ruskin to be picked up by weather radios throughout Sarasota, Charlotte and DeSoto counties.

The radios, which sound an alarm followed by details in case of tornadoes and other severe weather, do not pick up the signal in parts of south Sarasota County, west DeSoto County and north Charlotte County.

Staub did not request a specific dollar amount from the commission because the cost of the project and the amount of contributions from other sources have to be worked out.

County Emergency Management Director Gregg Feagans told commissioners that he expected to get substantial support from the state for the project, which is expected to cost between \$80,000 and \$125,000.

But Molly Payne, spokeswoman for the Florida Division of Emergency Management, said that the grant Feagans referred to will come from the federal government.

"The program through which the grant is awarded is a federal-

PLEASE SEE TRANSMITTER ON 5B

Boulevard repairs get green light

By Bryan Long
STAFF WRITER

County SKE

By Bryan Long
STAFF WRITER

Sensible but artistic. Harmonious with history.

That's the starting place for choosing Charlotte County's first piece of public art — guidelines that may help this community steer clear of Tampa's "exploding chicken" fallout.

Barbara Hill, Tampa's administrator of art in public places, still gets complaints about a giant, black and yellow sculpture that locals call the "exploding chicken." It was purchased by a bank and plopped on a busy corner near the University of Tampa.

"That was installed in 1988 and

people are still bitching," Hill said.

Fortunately for Hill, work with a long list of privately funded problems are compounded by the art.

Charlotte County spend tax dollars to codes actually prohibit endeavors. So the county's "exploding chicken" sculpture at Punta Gorda roadside bust of Columbus — have been funded.

But on Tuesday, the Commission passed a resolution that details the policies for the selectio



LOCAL/STATE

Venice/North Port

Community Square 2B
Obituaries 8B

Federal money for transmitter up in air

U.S. Rep. Dan Miller will not seek congressional money for a severe weather radio transmitter.

By **Bebe Bahnsen**
STAFF WRITER

Agencies trying to find money to station a severe weather radio transmitter in south Sarasota County shouldn't expect help from U.S. Rep. Dan Miller.

Miller, a Republican whose district covers most of Sarasota County, said through a spokeswoman

Thursday that he would not seek congressional funding for a transmitter that warns residents of approaching storms.

The U.S. Weather Service has no money available to build transmitters, but some members of Congress pressured the agency and found federal money to erect the equipment in their districts.

"We're about to put some (transmitters) in . . . Kentucky, but (Congress) will appropriate the funds," Weather Radio program manager Stan Johnson said Thursday from his office at Weather Service headquarters in Silver Spring, Md.

Rep. Harold Rogers, R-Ky., is chairman of the committee that controls the budget of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which includes the U.S. Weather Service.

Johnson said Congress responds to voters when they ask for federal

money.

"Usually it's a result of constituent pressure," he said.

Miller said he would not seek federal funds under any circumstances.

"He doesn't think Congress should designate specific projects that only benefit a small constituency," spokeswoman Christin Tinsworth said. In a written statement Miller said that NOAA will pay for the maintenance and operation of the transmitter after it is built, at an estimated cost of \$10,000 per year.

But Jon Preiksats, chief executive

officer of The Venice Foundation, doesn't think that is enough, a concern also expressed earlier by Sarasota County Emergency Management Director Gregg Feagans.

"Why should the federal government be allowed a free ride in this? The federal government has an obligation to protect its citizens," Preiksats said. "Why are we so unique that we are not covered? We'd like to see some actual hard dollar commitments from the National Weather

PLEASE SEE RADIO ON 5B

Grant plea denied

DAY CARE FROM 1B

The foundation will release the recipients of grants for this cycle today.

School officials said that providing day care on campus might attract additional qualified teachers to Toledo Blade and encourage teachers with young children to return to work sooner.

With only two licensed day-care centers in North port, it's difficult for teachers and other staff members who have preschoolers and infants to find day care close to their jobs. One-third of the school's 75-member staff members live in Sarasota and commute to North Port. Several others live in Venice.

The school had planned to build a portable to care for children ages 2-4.

"We're not sure what direction we will go in," said teacher Kimberly Sullivan, who was instrumental in seeking the grant. "We're hoping to find some sponsor or agency willing to fund this project."

She has already contacted the South County Family YMCA about a possible partnership.

Sharon Pesut, executive director of the YMCA, directed Sullivan to

give her a formal request.

"We would have to do research, look at the situation and decide what's possible out there," Pesut said.

In 1997, the Venice Foundation awarded a \$90,990 grant to the Sarasota YMCA Children, Youth and Family Services for a consultant to do a mapping of child-care services and populations in South County. The grant was also to develop a coalition of stakeholders to evaluate and provide input on the issues and to develop a family child-care association and in-house resource library that would allow home day-care center operators to borrow materials.

"At this point we want to get that mapping project completed in order to know what the best locations are in North Port and other areas we serve," Roberts said.

Roberts said the preliminary results of the mapping will be completed next month and the final analysis will be done in May. Sarasota County has \$50,000 in its budget to do a mapping of day-care needs in the northern part of Sarasota County. That's expected to be completed in September.

Money for transmitter up in air

RADIO FROM 1B

Service (to help with transmitter construction costs)."

Preiksats said he also planned to contact the governor's office to discuss funding possibilities.

He said the foundation was prepared to consider a contribution to allow the project to proceed quickly because he does not want it delayed because of bureaucratic hassles over federal funding.

Weather Service officials estimated that a transmitter could be installed in two or three months after a site is selected and money is available. The agency is sending representatives to view potential sites in or near Venice next week.

Preiksats' statement that the foundation was ready to consider a contribution was welcomed by Venice Police Chief Joe Slapp, one of the leaders of the effort to have the transmitter installed.

Slapp said that he plans to approach City Manager George Hunt about a city contribution to the project as soon as he has the final costs and details, which should be by next

week.

But the first commitment of money could come from Sarasota County as early as next week.

Commissioner Shannon Staub said Thursday that she discussed the issue with County Administrator Jim Ley and that she hoped to be able to request money, probably from the county contingency budget, at the commission meeting on Tuesday. However, she still lacked some essential information.

"We still haven't gotten a full report from (Emergency Management Director) Gregg Feagans," she explained.

Feagans and Slapp met this week with U.S. Weather Service officials at the weather center in Ruskin.

If she does not have all information by Tuesday, she will raise the matter at the next week's meeting, Staub said.

But she said that members of the public who believe the transmitter is important must make their voices heard.

"Hopefully, people would let the other commissioners know that they feel it's necessary," she said.

St. Patrick's parade set for success

PARADE FROM 1B

Friendly Sons and Daughters of St. Patrick, the Venice organization sponsoring the parade. "This is it."

About 70 groups are registered to participate — including local police and fire departments and go-cart-driving Shriners from Sarasota — said co-chairman Tom Beagley.

Ruth Jenkins of Bon Secours-Venice Hospital, who was selected the National Home Health Care Aide for 1997, will serve as grand marshal of the parade, Kolba said.

After the parade, a party will be held for Sons and Daughters members and their friends and guests.

A kick-off dinner and dance this evening will be open to the public. The Emerald Ball will be held at the community center at 6 p.m. For tickets or information, call Kolba at 485-4024.

Nearly all the Sarasota County commissioners and the Venice City Council members are expected to participate in the parade, Kolba said.

"There'll be a wide variety of contingents pretty much doing their own thing in order of march," said Kim O'Gorman, president of the Sons and Daughters.

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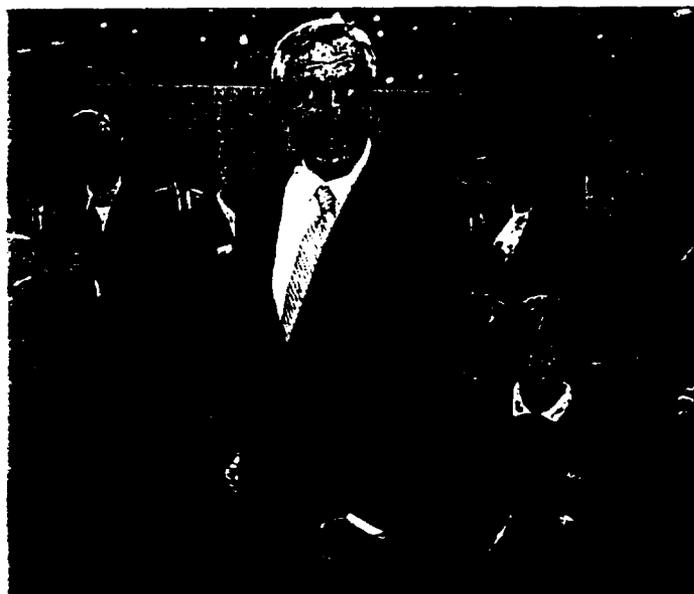
Cloudy in the morning, with a high in the lower 70s. Low tonight in 40s COMPLETE REPORT 16B

50 CENTS

NEWS FOCUSES CHILDREN



FLORIDA LEGISLATURE 1998



Gov. Lawton Chiles leads children from his Healthy Kids initiative down the aisle of the House chamber in Tallahassee as he prepares to deliver his last State of the State message Tuesday.



Flowers sent by lobbyists and cutouts representing Florida victims of child abuse await legislators in the House chamber on the session's opening day Tuesday in Tallahassee.

Republicans show who's in charge

By Alan Judd CAPITAL BUREAU

TALLAHASSEE — Gov. Lawton Chiles acknowledged that part of his final State of the State address Tuesday sounded like "a nostalgia trip." But he had barely finished recounting his four-decade political journey before Florida Republicans began depicting the Democratic governor more like a nostalgia act.

For more than an hour after Chiles' speech, which opened the Legislature's 1998 session, Republicans worked their respective corners of the Capitol, seemingly reciting lines from a script that portrayed the governor, who is retiring this year, as a political relic, a symbol of a political era that is all but over.

Perhaps more than any other time since Republicans won majorities in both legislative chambers in

PLEASE SEE SESSION ON 16A

NEWS BRIEFING

VENICE

Weather radio system sought

Severe weather radio transmissions do not fully reach some counties.

By Bebe Bahnsen STAFF WRITER

Most weather radios, which sound an alarm followed by broadcast details in case of approaching severe weather, do not work in some parts of middle and south Sarasota County, and in smaller sections of Charlotte County and DeSoto County, because these areas are out of reach of U.S. Weather Service transmitters in Tampa and Fort Myers.

But that situation may change soon, thanks to Bill Kennedy, a retired Weather Service meteorologist.

Kennedy, who met Monday with Venice Police Chief Joe Slapp, is spearheading an effort to have a transmitter built in Venice that would allow all residents of the three counties to receive clear Weather Service transmissions.

"I think Mr. Kennedy's made a believer out of me. Being in a coastal community we have to be able to come up with as many ways of tracking severe weather as possible," Slapp said.

But Sarasota County Emergency Management Coordinator Greg Feagans is not a believer.

"The history of this product is that it gives out false alerts," Feagans said, adding that some people had told him they turned the radios off to avoid being awakened when the alarm warned of weather that might be threatening an area several counties away.

New technology allows the Weather Service to pinpoint its warnings more narrowly, but, in any event, Feagans' argument didn't wash with Slapp.

"Whether people want to turn them off or leave them on, I want them to have that option," he said.

A transmitter could be up and running within three months if \$70,000 to \$80,000 can be found to fund the purchase.

Feagans had other objections to

PLEASE SEE RADIO ON 17A

Light therapy treats cancer

The new treatment kills cancerous cells by making them sensitive to certain wavelengths.

FROM STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

BALTIMORE — When doctors first found signs of cancer in Walter Winkelmeyer's esophagus, the prognosis was not good.

The 83-year-old Venice man was a poor candidate for surgery, with serious heart and lung problems. Winkelmeyer's Sarasota physicians referred him to a doctor in Tampa, who said he could not operate.

"He said, 'Wink, if you were my daddy, I'd love you dearly but I wouldn't operate because I'm going to lose you,'" Winkelmeyer said.

But through his daughter, Winkelmeyer learned of a new cancer-fighting procedure being performed at Johns Hopkins University in Maryland. The procedure uses light, in combination with special drugs, to kill cancer cells.

Doctors there agreed to treat him, Winkelmeyer is elated with results of his two treatments, which have left him cancer-free for six months.

"It was nothing like chemo(therapy) — nothing in the world like



STAFF PHOTO/ALAN JUDD

Walter Winkelmeyer of Venice has had his esophageal cancer treated with light. His skin is temporarily more sensitive to the sun, turning it red.

chemo," he said. His only side effects were trouble swallowing for about a week, and light-sensitive skin that left him especially susceptible to sunburns.

"I've had toothaches worse than that," he said.

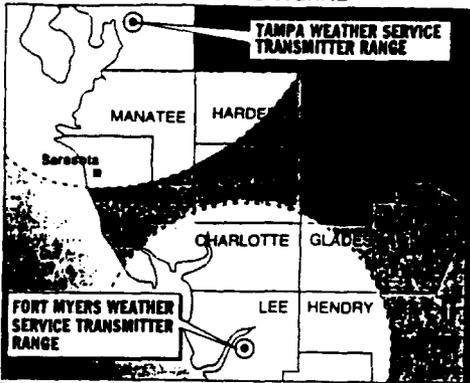
Scientists once scoffed at harnessing light to fight cancer and oth-

PLEASE SEE THERAPY ON 16A

FORD-KAUS TESTIFIES

Judge admits she was wrong

LOSING THE SIGNAL



Circles indicate areas in which weather radios receive information from transmitters in Tampa and Fort Myers, according to the U.S. Weather Service. Part of DeSoto County is also covered by a transmitter installed by Highlands County. A transmitter in Venice would reach the shaded areas of Sarasota and Charlotte counties, and give DeSoto County complete coverage.

Weather radio system sought

RADIO FROM IA

the radios, as well as his own ideas about what residents should do when threatening weather is nearby.

"(The radios) give you a false sense of security, and they do not give you the warning you need," Feagans said.

Instead of relying on a weather radio, Feagans said, people should stay awake and watch television reports if any kind of storm seems possible, even if it means sleepless nights.

"You don't go to sleep. You don't go to bed when you have a weather alert. You are at risk. You are going to die (if you don't stay awake)," Feagans said.

But other weather and emergency experts contend that the system can be valuable.

"The weather radio is the best warning system there is. It's proven itself time and time again, including last week in In Osceola and Orange counties (where 41 people died when a severe tornado struck the area)," said John Fleming, a senior analyst with the state Division of Emergency Management.

The weather service has four transmitters throughout Southwest Florida. South Sarasota County and parts of Charlotte and DeSoto counties fall beyond the coverage range of transmitters in Pinellas and Lee counties.

A transmitter in Venice would cover all those areas. "My personal feeling is it is one of the major holes (in Weather Service reception) in the state," Fleming said.

Feagans has been unwilling to ask for county funds for the project because he believes that transmitters should be paid for by the federal government.

"We're not receiving our fair share of weather service money," Feagans said.

But the Weather Service has not had money for transmitters for several years, and the agency urges communities to seek other sources of funding rather than wait for Congress to increase its budget.

Collier and Highlands Counties are among several Florida communities that have used a variety of sources to fund transmitters in their areas.

Weather Service meteorologist Karl Loper said that, in some cases, counties don't act until a weather-related tragedy strikes.

"It seems like every time a disaster strikes (counties) find money everywhere," he said.

Some residents of areas that are not covered by the Tampa or Fort Myers transmitters report that their weather radios work just fine, but most residents would have difficulty getting clear signals, Loper said.

Loper explained that higher-quality more expensive radios might work better, and that placing a radio near a window might also help.

The most reliable way to increase reception, he said, is to hook the radio to an outside antenna.

Both Loper and Kennedy said that a transmitter in Venice would allow all working weather radios in the three counties to receive clear signals.

Feagans said he planned to include funding for a weather transmitter in the budget he sends to the Sarasota County Commission for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1.

"I'll be putting it out for the commission's consideration, but that doesn't mean it will be funded, unless there is some other funding source," Feagans said.

But Kennedy and Slapp said they were unwilling to wait, especially because the unusual weather patterns spawned by El Nino might continue for several more months, and they are already discussing possible funding sources.

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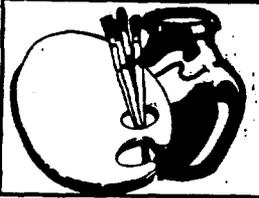
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11:00 AM - 5:00 PM

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VENICE/AM

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News:Diane H. McFarlin, Executive Editor
Janet S. Weaver, Managing Editor**Editorial:**Waldo Proffitt Jr., Editor
Thomas Lee Tryon, Editorial Page Editor

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EDITORIALS

Sending the wrong signal

Sleepless in Venice isn't the title of a new movie based on events in coastal Florida. It's the strategy recommended by local emergency management officials for south Sarasota County residents when they hear the storm winds rattle their awnings.

In the aftermath of Florida's deadly tornadoes, a lot of people have considered buying special radios that alert their users to several weather bulletins. But, due to the locations of signal transmitters, those radios would be useless in parts of south Sarasota County. In those areas, people live in a communications void that separates National Weather Service signals radiating from stations in Ruskin and Fort Myers.

According to Gregg Feagans, Sarasota County emergency management director, those residents ought to stay up all night and track storm progress on television.

Bill Kennedy of Venice, a retired NWS meteorologist, has a different idea. He is spearheading an effort to install a transmitter in Venice that would fill that void with storm-forecast signals. Kennedy proposes that the transmitter be installed — at a relatively nominal cost of \$70,000 to \$80,000 — in three months, which would be sufficient time to prepare for the collision of El Nino and hurricane patterns that many weather forecasters believe may

plague coastal Florida this year.

Feagans criticizes the National Weather Service broadcast signals for being too general, sending what amount to false warnings to many areas. He's also concerned that people who have the radios go to bed during a nighttime storm, depending on the Weather Service's alerts to warn them in an emergency, instead of watching TV for the latest information.

Indeed, the weather radios don't provide foolproof forecasts or protection. But they serve a purpose and, in certain circumstances, could help save lives. And, besides, evolving technology will produce forecasts that are increasingly accurate and specific.

Joe Slapp, Venice police chief, believes that people at least should have that option available.

Slapp and Kennedy make good points — the public ought to have that choice. For a nominal amount, it makes sense in weather-sensitive Southwest Florida to have full coverage for Weather Service broadcasts. We hope the appeal for a transmitter might be considered favorably by the Venice Foundation, a community charity established to promote the health, safety and welfare of south Sarasota County residents.

We suspect many South County residents would lose less sleep if they had had the same weather-radio coverage as the people in the rest of this area.

E

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Exhibit 1(e)

ATT: Ellen

April 28, 1998

**MINUTES
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SOUTH COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER
4000 SOUTH TAMiami TRAIL
ROOM 228
VENICE, FLORIDA**

Book 66

Page 1

9:00 a.m.

DRAFT

David R. Mills, Chairman, District 2
Shannon Staub, Vice-Chairman, District 3
Raymond A. Pilon, District 1
Jack O'Neil, District 4
Robert L. Anderson, District 5

Also present were:

James Ley, County Administrator
Jorge L. Fernández, County Attorney
Meg A. Wittmer, Assistant County Attorney
Peter H. Ramsden, Clerk of Circuit Court Finance Director
Sue Garland, Deputy Clerk

INVOCATION

Reverend Joe Brannon, Colonial Oaks Baptist Church

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner O'Neil

PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATIONS:

Commr. Staub moved to approve the Proclamation for the Prudential Youth Leadership Institute - Youth Actually Kare in Sarasota County Day (YAKS). Commr. Pilon seconded the motion, which carried by a 5-0 vote.

PRESENTATION OF SERVICE AWARDS:

Robert P. Kilcullen, Fire Department - 20 years
Mark S. Blinkhorn, Fire Department - 10 years

CONSENT MOTION

A motion was made by Commr. Anderson, seconded by Commr. Staub, and carried by a 5-0 vote to approve Items 1-14 as follows, with the exception of Items 10 and 11 considered later this meeting.

1. PLANNING AND ZONING

Authorized participation in the United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Year 2000 Census Programs.

2. RESOLUTIONS

Authorized the preparation of a Resolution that would repeal Resolution No. 95-230 and create a new Advisory Committee to provide recommendations to the Sarasota County Community Redevelopment Agency about the Englewood Community Redevelopment Area. The new Advisory Committee shall consist of seven members with four-year terms of appointment.

3. CONTRACTS

Approved Contract No. 98-226, Change Order No. 6 to Contract No. 91-386 with Wilson, Miller, Barton and Peek, Inc., for the design of Phase IV of the Englewood Sports Complex in the amount of \$171,200.00.

April 28, 1998

**MINUTES
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Book 66
Page 11

DRAFT

31. AIRPORTS/PLANNING & ZONING - Continued

Commr. Staub moved to close the public hearing. Following discussion regarding the alleged use of the closed runway (5-23), and on concern with the two-story refuge center sirens, Chairman Mills declared the public hearing closed and individual Board member comments were made.

(5-0429)

Commr. Staub moved that "Staff be directed to develop a plan for Buchan Airfield that addresses the issue of safety, management, and operations; the cost therein; restrictions such as ultralights and time openings; and any Ordinance amendments that may be needed, and to look at the aspect of a community center and shelter as far as compatibility of that site or another site within Englewood." Commr. Pilon seconded the motion.

Commr. Pilon amended the motion to include in the study the maintenance situation and a fee structure review. Commr. Staub accepted the amendment as part of the motion.

During the discussion, Commr. Pilon supported a public/private partnership for Buchan Airfield; Chairman Mills urged Staff to enforce Ordinance Nos. 97-080 and 95-081, governing Buchan Airport activities; and Attorney Wittmer suggested that the Board consider amending and/or rescinding Resolution No. 97-116 for closure of airport activities at Buchan Airfield.

Following further Board comments, including a recommendation by Chairman Mills to review airport privatization and the timing of the report to be prepared, the motion carried by a 4-1 roll call vote of the Districts, as follows:

- District No. 1 - Commr. Pilon voted "Aye"
- District No. 2 - Commr. Mills voted "Aye"
- District No. 3 - Commr. Staub voted "Aye"
- District No. 4 - Commr. O'Neil voted "Aye"
- District No. 5 - Commr. Anderson voted "No"

24. COMMISSION REPORTS - Continued

I. ORGANIZATIONS

Commr. Staub moved to authorize the Chairman to sign a letter endorsing the WENG AM 1530 (Englewood Radio Station) application to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for approval to construct and operate an FM Translator which will allow radio broadcasting 24-hours a day for emergency benefit. Commr. Anderson seconded the motion, which carried by a 5-0 vote.



32. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

A. AIRPORTS/BOARDS

Mr. John J. Fellin applauded the action of the Board with respect to Buchan Airport (see Item 31); noted his service on the former Buchan Airport Advisory Committee, the former Englewood Citizens Advisory Committee, and the Englewood Area Planning Advisory Board; offering assistance in resolving Buchan Airport problems.

RECESS: 6:03 p.m. - 6:13 p.m.
(5-0944)



COUNTY OF CHARLOTTE

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Charlotte County Administration Center
18500 Murdock Circle
Port Charlotte, Florida 33948-1094
Phone: (941) 743-1300
FAX: (941) 743-1310

April 28, 1998

Federal Communications Commission
Mass Media Bureau
Washington, DC 20554

RE: FM TRANSLATOR OPERATION

Dear Sir:

It has been brought to my attention that one of our local radio stations, WENG 1530 AM, a service of the Murry Broadcasting Company, is filing an application with the FCC to construct and operate an FM translator. This translator would be used during times when the station is precluded from operating its AM station, thus providing 24 hour service to our communities.

Located in Englewood, on the Central West Coast of Florida, and specifically on the Cape Haze Peninsula. The peninsula is only a few feet above sea level and currently, there is only one evacuation route out of the area. Cooperation between Charlotte and Sarasota Counties will eventually remedy the evacuation situation, around the year 2006.

The area often experiences flooding during rain events and hurricanes are an almost constant threat during the summer months. Emergency officials depend on advanced warning systems, such as radio and television to warn the public of pending threat. Allowing WENG to operate 24 hours a day would greatly assist our entire community.

Sincerely,

Matthew D. DeBoer, Chairman
Charlotte County Board
of County Commissioners

MDD/jmd
h:\file:cg



COUNTY OF CHARLOTTE

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Charlotte County Administration Center
18500 Murdock Circle
Port Charlotte, Florida 33948-1094
Phone: (941) 743-1300
FAX: (941) 743-1310

April 21, 1998

Federal Communications Commission
Mass Media Bureau
Washington, DC 20554

RE: FM-TRANSLATOR OPERATION

Gentlemen:

Radio station WENG AM 1530, Englewood Florida is currently attempting to receive approval to install an FM translator so as to provide the best 24-hour coverage of extreme weather conditions. It is to the benefit of the Englewood community and the surrounding residents of the Cape Haze peninsula that their request be granted.

At the present time, existing avenues of egress are woefully inadequate to accommodate evacuees in case of catastrophic events. By all estimations, sufficient emergency routes will not be available until well into the next century. This ability will enable the Murray Broadcasting Company to keep listeners informed in case a major hurricane requires the immediate evacuation of the peninsula.

Sincerely,

Mac V. Horton, Vice Chairman
Board of County Commissioners

MVH/jat



COUNTY OF CHARLOTTE

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Charlotte County Administration Center
18500 Murdock Circle
Port Charlotte, Florida 33948-1094
Phone: (941) 743-1300
FAX: (941) 743-1310

April 29, 1998

Federal Communications Commission
Mass Media Bureau
Washington, DC 20554

Re: FM Translator Operation

Dear Sir/Madam:

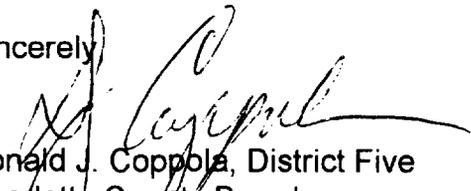
Reference is made to the application of Murray Broadcasting Company to construct and operate an FM translator as an addition to its daytime AM programming of AM station (WENG) Englewood, Florida. It is my understanding that Murray Broadcasting will use this additional air time to provide twenty-four hour service to the Englewood community, including much needed weather information.

The communities served by WENG AM1530 are on the Cape Haze peninsula of south west Florida, a mecca for retirees and young families alike. Unfortunately, this beautiful area is also prone to severe weather and flood conditions. At the present time the only weather information available is broadcast from stations 50 to 100 miles away, and it's truly a guessing game to determine what might affect us, and when.

The ability to broadcast 'round the clock' would make WENG even more valuable to the community than it is now. It may seem contrary, but this areas is also sometimes call 'the lightning capital', and we frequently experience forest fires. Waking up to the smell of smoke can be a frightening experience, and being able to tune in to a local 'information bureau' so to speak, could save lives, or provide the comfort of knowing that the fire isn't at your doorstep.

As a member of the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners, I have come to know and rely on Station WENG, and its dedicated staff, to provide accurate news, weather and community information, and I am certain that the added capability of an FM translator operation will be a great service.

Sincerely,


Donald J. Coppola, District Five
Charlotte County Board
of County Commissioners



COUNTY OF CHARLOTTE

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Charlotte County Administration Center
18500 Murdock Circle
Port Charlotte, Florida 33948-1094
Phone: (941) 743-1300
FAX: (941) 743-1310

April 28, 1998

Federal Communications Commission
Mass Media Bureau
Washington, D.C. 20554

Gentlemen:

I would like to address you with regard to the application of Murray Broadcasting Company for a FM translator.

The service area of this station is largely a coastal community, with many retirees. Presently, the only sources of information available are (1) local newspapers (2) television stations based a minimum of 50 miles away, (3) radio stations based at least 25 miles away, and WENG, which is situated in the heart of Englewood and the Cape Haze Peninsula.

The ability to broadcast 24-hours a day would make WENG AM 1530 the vital source of emergency information that is needed in this area. In the course of one year, this area was threatened by several hurricanes, brush fires caused by severe lightning storms, driving rain which caused flooding on many of the roadways, various road closings for construction work and/or repairs, boil-water advisories due to water line breaks, and many other issues which cannot now be brought to the community's attention in a timely manner, or with any real accuracy.

Please carefully consider this application. I know the community will be grateful. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Adam Cummings, District Two
Charlotte County Board of
County Commissioners

AC/dmg

Michael Youssef
18730 Ayrshire Circle
Port Charlotte, Fl. 33948

March 30, 1998

Federal Communications Commission
Mass Media Bureau
Washington, D.C.

Ref: Application for AM/FM Simulcast Privileges
Radio Station WENG, Englewood, Fl.

Dear Gentlemen:

I am writing this letter in support of the subject application. The Englewood area is unique, in that it is partially located in Charlotte County and partially in Sarasota County. The only audio media to serve both portions of Englewood is WENG.

As a former Charlotte County Commissioner, who served from 1992 to 1996, I am well aware of the fact that this area is only a few feet above sea level and is prone to flooding during heavy rains.

WENG receives information from both the Charlotte and Sarasota County Emergency Management Offices, and can relay that information in seconds. This would be of paramount importance to drivers on the road who would not otherwise be informed of hazards that they might encounter during a severe storm or other inclement weather event.

Furthermore, WENG can relay such information to our citizens within seconds, and has their own generators in the event of a severe and prolonged power outage.

The approval of the subject application is certainly in the public interest, and it is my hope that you will approve it.

Sincerely,



Michael Youssef



COUNTY OF CHARLOTTE

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

CHARLOTTE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER
18500 MURDOCK CIRCLE
PORT CHARLOTTE, FLORIDA 33948-1094
(941) 743-1270

Federal Communications Commission
Mass Media Bureau
Washington, D.C.

April 3, 1998

Re: Permission for FM translator operation by WENG Radio in Englewood, FL

Dear Sir/Madam:

This letter is being submitted in support of the application of Murray Broadcasting Company to construct and operate an FM translator in conjunction with its operation of the daytime-only Station WENG (AM), Englewood, Florida.

Station WENG (AM) serves over 70,000 residents of the Charlotte-Sarasota County area, situated on the Cape Haze Peninsula. This low-lying area is subject to frequent surface flooding and faces the real possibility of hurricane force storms requiring the evacuation of a significant percentage of the aforementioned population.

I have served as the Director of Emergency Management in Charlotte County for 11 years. As part of the preparedness efforts being promoted through this office, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Florida Division of Emergency Management, broadcast stations serve as vital tools in disseminating official information and guidance to the large, at-risk population.

As the only licensed station serving the Englewood community, Station WENG (AM) is at the forefront in efforts to keep the local residents aware of threatening weather conditions. Since there are no certified hurricane shelters on the peninsula, early warning of serious weather conditions is a must.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Federal Communications Commission to permit Station WENG (AM) to operate an FM translator station to serve the local community during the night. In its current daytime-only status, the Station provides the sole source of local information from sunrise to sunset. The additional provision of nighttime service would provide a vital source of potentially lifesaving information.

With problems continuing to be encountered with the still-developing EAS, I think it is imperative that we seek out alternative broadcast methods that can expediently provide what may be a life saving message or guidance as to protective measures that can be implemented. It is my sincere desire to see Station WENG (AM) granted this license, so that I might more thoroughly disseminate warning and notification to these at-risk residents.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I am sure that I speak for the 70,000 residents who will benefit from nighttime service by Station WENG (AM). If I can provide additional information related to the particular vulnerability of these coastal residents, or address the long standing relationship between my office and this broadcast entity, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wayne P. Sallade". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Wayne P. Sallade
Director

ENGLEWOOD AREA FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

HEADQUARTERS
599 So. Indiana Avenue
Englewood, FL 34223-3787
(813) 474-3311
FAX: 473-2600



BUSINESS OFFICE
403 Boundary Blvd.
Rotonda, FL 33947-2002
(813) 697-6644
FAX: 697-8673

March 25, 1998

Federal Communications Commission
Mass Media Bureau

Gentlemen,

It has come to our attention that WENG Radio AM 1530 is applying for broadcast privileges which would allow twenty-four hour coverage. The Englewood Area Fire Control District strongly supports this application. This will be tremendously helpful in times of severe weather events.

Our geographic area is sometimes known as "Lightning Alley". As a public safety issue, it would be a great benefit to the community to be able to provide information to the public regarding brush and forest fires in a timely manner. During dry weather, and even when it's not so dry as with this *El Nino* weather pattern, substantial amounts of acreage burns from lightning, careless campers and drivers, and mischievous or malicious teens and adults.

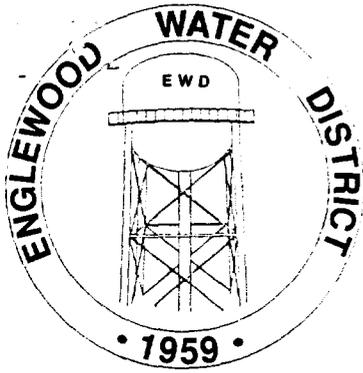
The Englewood Area Fire Control District could inform the citizens that information is available by listening to the WENG station whenever there is severe lightning activity or impending storms, and could provide WENG with specific information regarding fires, areas to avoid and when certain areas should be evacuated.

Sincerely,

Bennett A. Rock, Jr.
Fire Chief

BAR/bj

REF: 97-0325A



ENGLEWOOD WATER DISTRICT

P.O. Box 1399 • Englewood, Florida 34295-1399
(941) 474-3217 • Suncom: 552-7011 • Fax: (941) 475-0497
201 Selma Avenue

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Administrator

Wayne R. Roddey
Assistant Administrator

March 25, 1998

Federal Communications Commission
Mass Media Bureau

Gentlemen:

It has come to our attention that WENG Radio AM 1530 is applying for broadcast privileges which would allow 24-hour coverage. The Englewood Water District strongly supports this application. This will be tremendously helpful in times of severe weather events.

As the supplier of potable water and sanitary sewer services, it would be a great benefit to the community to have specific information regarding storms, hurricanes and related topics. If this 24-hour service were available, the Englewood community could rely on factual information regarding our area, and not have to estimate the impact of a storm based on information developed for areas 50 (Sarasota or Ft. Myers) to 100 (Tampa) miles away.

The Englewood Water District could inform it's customers to listen to this station whenever there is an impending storm, and could provide WENG with specific information regarding water and sewer line breaks, service outages, and public health and safety issues regarding water and sewer during and after storms.

Sincerely,

James A. Elder, P.E.
Administrator

mac

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Susan A. Burk, a secretary in the law firm of Pepper & Corazzini, L.L.P., do hereby certify that on this 8th day of February, 1999, copies of the foregoing "Comments" were sent by first-class mail to the following:

Bryan Smeathers, President
American Community AM
Broadcasters Association
One WMTA Drive
P.O. Box 973
Central City, KY, 42330


Susan A. Burk