

Branching Out

Trail of Success

The Housing & Community Development Division embarked on a new journey this year to help qualified residents replace their substandard homes. Lake County's home repair/replacement program is funded by the State Housing Initiatives Partnership and is designed to help residents with low-incomes make repairs, rehabilitate or replace their homes to ensure that they are

decent, safe and sanitary. Traditionally, repairs are sufficient for a home to meet current building codes; however, for the first time ever, the program coordinated the complete replacement of two homes in the Tavares area that had fallen into disrepair. In addition, the Division coordinated the replacement of seven homes using state allocated disaster funds from the Feb. 2, 2007, tornadoes.

An Alternate Route

LakeXpress, Lake County's public transportation service, celebrated its one-year anniversary. During its first year of service, LakeXpress ridership averaged about 400 trips per day, which is 14 percent higher than expected when it began operation. In addition, LakeXpress unveiled a new circulator route in Mount Dora. The new Mount Dora circulator is the third route for LakeXpress. Buses on routes 1 and 2 operate hourly Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 7:45 p.m. along the U.S. Highway 441 corridor from The Villages to Eustis and in downtown Leesburg.

Adventures in Learning

By sharing information with elementary school students about recycling (Department of Environmental Utilities) and water conservation (Lake Soil & Water Conservation District), Lake County seeks new audiences to increase public awareness and activism on important environmental issues. Through numerous guided hikes, canoe trips and bird watching excursions, the County's park rangers helped more than 2,700 residents learn about the natural gifts of Lake County. The Lake County Extension Office also introduced a new educational series this year titled "Timely Topics" with monthly programs covering subjects such as food safety and protecting homes from mold and mildew. More than 300 citizens participated in the series.

Down the Road: With rising gas prices, interest in LakeXpress is expected to continue to increase in 2008-2009. A new route that is expected to open next year will service the Umatilla area. For more information about



Sage Advice

*Leave the car at home.
For short trips to the store
or park, try walking, riding a bike
or taking the bus.*

REBUILDING HOPE — The Lake County Housing & Community Development Division celebrated its first home replacement project in April 2008.

LakeXpress, call (352) 326-8637 or log on to www.RideLakeXpress.com.