

Group wants folks to adopt beaches and parks

Patrick McCallister
 STAFF WRITER
 pmccallister@YourVoiceWeekly.com

PALM CITY — Keep Martin Beautiful has more than 40 nominees for its annual Environmental Stewardship awards, and the winners will be announced on Wednesday, Feb. 4.

“Every year we recognize individuals, businesses, youth groups, and government agencies that have gone above and beyond their mission,” Rob Ranieri, executive director said. “We just got the judges’ books back, so we’ll start tallying it.”

The winners will be announced at the Palm City not-for-profit’s annual

ADOPT from page 1

awards event and dinner. That’ll be at Piper’s Landing Yacht & Country Club, 6160 S.W. Thistle Terrace, Palm City, 6 to 9 p.m.

Keep Martin Beautiful and the county’s Parks & Recreation Department are also trying to find beaches and parks some loving homes that’ll take care of them.

OK, not really homes. But some folks to adopt them, Kevin Abatte, the parks and rec director, said.

“We’re going to launch an Adopt-A-Beach, Adopt-A-Park program,” he said.

The Adopt-A-Beach program is slated to launch with a \$15,000 matching grant from the state’s Department of Environmental Protection the County Commission is supposed to approve later this month. The county’s solid waste will kick in another \$15,000.

“We’ll have it done by April,” Abatte said.

Abatte said that Adopt-A-Beach is based on the familiar Adopt-A-Road program that Keep Martin Beautiful runs for the county.

The county hopes to radiate Adopt-A-Beach westward to include parks throughout 2015.

“Same principles (as Adopt-A-Road) and we’ll continue to work with Keep Martin Beautiful,” he said.

Ranieri said that in addition to running Martin’s Adopt-A-Road program, Keep Martin Beautiful runs Stuart’s Adopt-A-Street program.

“We get sponsors to take care of a stretch of road,” he said. “They go out about six times a year and clean up that road. It’s been pretty successful on the roads. Right now, we have about 90 roads and streets adopted throughout the county.”

Keep Martin Beautiful gives the road adopters safety vests, bags and sticks. The adopters pick their schedules, but it must be at least six times a year, and they have to submit reports. In exchange, they get their names on signs.

With all eyes on the Indian River Lagoon these days, Ranieri said Adopt-A-Road and soon Adopt-A-Park make a huge difference in protecting the waters from more damage.

“The efforts we do, especially when you get farther west, removes debris, and sometimes people dump things that go straight into the water,” he said. Ranieri added, “There’s an ecological as well as economic impact to this. Tourism is still our bread and butter here in Martin County.”

Keep Martin Beautiful also

ADOPT from page 3

sponsors the local part of International Coastal Cleanup Day, which will be on Sept. 20. Last year, the environmental organization had 36 volunteer work sites across the county, including four in Palm City.

“Anything with water,” Ranieri said. “Anything with water in it we clean when it comes to the coastal cleanup.”

Volunteers helped remove beached, floating and submerged debris at Charlie and Jock Leighton along with Lance Cpl. Justin Wilson Park and Pendarvis Cove

parks.

“We had over 2,000 volunteers, and we collected a little over 29,000 pounds (of debris),” Ranieri said. “I’m happy to report that that’s down from the previous year, which was 40,000 pounds.”

Ranieri attributed to reduction to greater awareness of the troubles the St. Lucie and Indian rivers are facing.

Tickets to the annual awards dinner are \$75.

To find out more about Keep Martin Beautiful, and the annual awards event and dinner, visit www.KeepMartinBeautiful.org. The phone number is (772) 781-1222.



Photo courtesy of Keep Martin Beautiful
 More than 2,000 volunteers helped Palm City’s Keep Martin Beautiful clean 29,000 pounds of debris from shores and waterways during the 2014 International Coastal Cleanup. Keep Martin Beautiful and Martin County are introducing Adopt-A-Beach and Adopt-A-Park in coming months. The programs aim to build on successes of the Adopt-A-Road program.

