



WEEKEND WAVE

Friday Economic Roundup | 02.17.2017

Punta Gorda Airport Passenger Traffic up for 39th Consecutive Month

Punta Gorda, FL (January 10, 2017) - The Charlotte County Airport Authority announces the total passenger count for the twelve months ending January 31 is 1,146,953. The Punta Gorda Airport passenger count for January, 2017 was 105,188. This is a 37.43% increase in passenger traffic for January 2017 compared with January 2016 (76,538) passengers.

In January, there were 52,411 boarding passengers and 52,777 arriving passengers. This is the 39th consecutive month the Airport has seen an increase in passenger traffic in year over year monthly traffic.

Kathleen Coppola, Charlotte County Airport Authority Commissioner stated, "We are proud to report our increase in Punta Gorda Airport passengers and of course, this is also a great start for the new year."

Entrepreneurs invited to swim in Shark Tank-style event

By **GARY ROBERTS** - Staff Writer - CHARLOTTE SUN

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA - Would you be interested in an enterprise that applies the priceline.com model to education? Say you want to pursue an MBA, so you call up a single website that allows you to find the best university, and most unbeatable deal, across the nation.

Or maybe you're in the market for health services, so you go to one resource to expedite quality care for you or a loved one. How about locating hard-to-find, sanitizing equipment for your home, restaurant or hotel?

The answers to all these questions may be found in actual proposals submitted for an upcoming Shark Tank-style competition, where would-be entrepreneurs and their ideas are pitted against one another, vying for a favorable nod from judges and financial backing to realize their ideas.

Three to five contestants will compete for \$50,000 in this first-ever tournament in Charlotte County, based on the popular TV reality series.

Entrepreneurs from Charlotte, DeSoto, Lee and Sarasota counties should submit their startup business plans to VenturePitch SWFL at www.tamiami-e.co. But the entry deadline is Feb. 15, so aspiring job-creators should not delay.

Ultimately, finalists will pitch their plan to seasoned investors on stage in front of an audience. The live event will be held March 30, at Isles Yacht Club, 1780 W. Marion Ave., Punta Gorda.

The VenturePitch SWFL series is part of the Tamiami Angel Funds' eco initiative to build a strong entrepreneurial network from Sarasota to Naples.

SCORE volunteers will comprise the Screening Committee that will first narrow the field, then select the finalists. And they know how to make business startups work.

SCORE has more than 300 chapters across the country to help small businesses get off the ground, grow and achieve their goals through education and mentorship. Nearly half a million entrepreneurs count on SCORE each year for help with fulfilling their dream of starting a business, as well as helping existing enterprises grow.

And committee chair Jim Getz already has come across some potential success stories among the early submissions.

"It's a good mix. Some really good ideas," he said.

Some proposals could be better, though. A few prospects could use a better business plan, he said, complete with financial projections and a profit-and-loss statement.

The Screening Committee will choose the best entries after Feb. 15, inviting the finalists for follow-up interviews, another key step in the selection process. There, the panel of judges will explore contestants' drive and experience, as well as their ability to sell their idea.

"We will be looking at whether they have the personal makeup to start a business and see it through to fruition," Getz said.

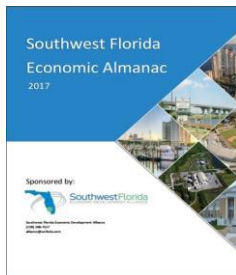
Sponsors of this exciting event include"

- Tamiami Angel Funds,
- Adrenaline Venture Fund,
- The Hatchery at Babcock Ranch,
- North Port Economic Development Corporation,
- Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce,
- SCORE and the
- Enterprise Charlotte Economic Council.

ECEC President Rob Humpel said his nonprofit organization, which serves as a funding vehicle for businesses to invest in Charlotte County, was happy to contribute to the pot of venture capital. "We were looking for a way to support the event and figured we would become a sponsor," he said. "I think it's a great event. Sometimes startup firms have a good idea and they're trying to implement it, but they don't have the forum to get resources and support behind it. Here they can pitch their idea to people who can help them get to the next level."

So far, about two dozen entries have been received, and others are welcome.

"We've had a number of applications come forth, but I'd certainly like to see even more," Getz said.



Florida Gulf Coast University's RERI published the inaugural edition of the Southwest Florida Economic Almanac this month. The Almanac covers economic and demographic data from the number of farms in Southwest Florida, to the amount of money area residents donate to charity, to the amount of time local employees spend commuting. [CLICK HERE](#) to open the Almanac.

Florida Economic News

- Internet travel company considers Miramar headquarters ([South Florida Sun-Sentinel](#))
- Naples film and TV studio doubles in size ([Business Observer](#))
- Pet food retailer Chewy to open fulfillment center in Marion County, add 600 jobs ([Florida Trend](#))

Entrepreneur News

- Why your title (and role) is important for clients to understand ([Ron Stein](#))
- Information overload can negatively impact sales efforts, customer service ([Jerry Osteryoung](#))

[JOIN OUR MAILING LIST](#)

Charlotte County Economic Development Office
18501 Murdock Circle, Suite 302, Port Charlotte, FL 33948

Port Charlotte, FL 33948 | 941-764-4941
FloridaEDO@CharlotteCountyFL.gov
<http://cleared4takeoff.com/>