



CHARLOTTE COUNTY
Economic Development

WEEKEND WAVE

07-08-16



Friday Economic Roundup

Officials OK Western Michigan University aviation program

Provided by Western Michigan University

Florida's Commission for Independent Education has approved a provisional license for Western Michigan University to offer aviation and several other high-profile academic programs in Charlotte County.

The commission approved a provisional license for WMU to operate a Florida campus at 26300 Airport Road in Punta Gorda.

The license approvals provide a green light for WMU, Charlotte County, the Punta Gorda Airport and Florida SouthWestern State College to move forward with plans to launch pilot training and aviation maintenance technology programs - each leading to a bachelor's degree. Discussions on that initiative have been underway since 2014.

"This is the start of a fantastic future and a wonderful partnership between Western Michigan University and the communities of Southwest Florida," said Bill Truex, chairman of the Charlotte County Commission after hearing the news. In addition to aviation, the provisional license make it possible for a number of other WMU graduate and undergraduate programs to be offered. Included on the list authorized for each site are several from WMU's nationally recognized health and human services disciplines, which could grow quickly through new research opportunities and enhanced clinical capacity. Other in-demand fields

would be offered as well. Degree programs in physician assistant and interdisciplinary health services could be offered through the Punta Gorda campus, for instance.

Final approval for WMU program offerings must come from the Higher Learning Commission, which is the University's accreditation body. Once such approvals are obtained, WMU and its Florida partners in the aviation effort will work out final details for those degree programs, and the university will move forward with additional programs as the populations' needs and interests dictate.

22nd Annual Blue Chip Community Business Award

The 22nd annual Southwest Florida Blue Chip Community Business Award, coordinated and sponsored by BB&T- Oswald Trippe and Company and BB&T Bank will take place Thursday, Nov. 3 at Harborside Event Center, located at 1375 Monroe Street in Fort Myers. The annual Blue Chip Award program recognizes successful, small business owners who have overcome adversity to achieve success.

Charlotte, Collier and Lee County for-profit businesses that have been in operation for at least three years under the same ownership and employ five to 400 people are eligible for the Blue Chip Award. Applications must be submitted no later than Sept. 6, 2016 and independent judges will select the winning entry.

The 2016 Southwest Florida Blue Chip Community Business Award is endorsed by the Charlotte County Economic Development Office, Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce, Englewood-Cape Haze Area Chamber of Commerce, Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce, Bonita Springs Area Chamber of Commerce, Business Observer, Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce, Christian Chamber of Southwest Florida, City of Cape Coral Economic Development Office, Estero Chamber of Commerce, Florida Gulf Coast University, Florida Southwestern State College, Florida Weekly, Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce, Greater Lehigh Acres Chamber of Commerce, Gulfshore Business, Hodges University, Lee County Economic Development Office/Horizon Council, Sanibel & Captiva Islands Chamber of Commerce, Southwest Florida Business Today, Southwest Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, The Greater Fort Myers Beach Area Chamber of Commerce and The Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce.

For information on attending the Blue Chip Award program or for submitting an application, please contact Stacey Mercado at 239- 433-7189 or SMercado@BBandT.com.

FLORIDA ECONOMIC NEWS

- 350 Biggest Companies in Florida ([Florida Trend](#))
- Kennedy Space Center: Boeing signs up to sponsor attraction ([Orlando Sentinel](#))
- Rectrix Aviation is attracting business as it grows ([Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#))
- Publix is getting into the grocery delivery business ([Tampa Bay Times](#))
- Royal Caribbean to build new terminal at PortMiami ([Florida Trend](#))
- Florida's 2015 GDP growth ranked third in nation ([Orlando Sentinel](#))

US ECONOMIC NEWS

- June hiring surge of 287,000 suggests rebounding US economy ([AP](#))

ENTREPRENEUR NEWS

- Lessons learned from companies that failed to keep up with technology ([Jerry Osteryoung](#))

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