



**CHARLOTTE COUNTY**  
Economic Development

# WEEKEND WAVE

1-23-15



## Friday Economic Roundup

### **AREA NEWS**

#### **Charlotte County sees tourism surge**

By GARY ROBERTS STAFF WRITER CHARLOTTE SUN

MURDOCK - Tourism officials are expecting record numbers this year in Charlotte County, following two previous years that also achieved all-time highs.

"After three very painful years, we have bounced back and are seeing record years," said

Lorah Steiner, county tourism director. "There are some good things happening in Charlotte County."

By almost any measure - number of visitors, money spent, hotel bed tax revenues - Charlotte County is experiencing a renaissance in tourist travel.

In fiscal year 2014, an estimated 178,800 people visited Charlotte County, up from 154,700 the year before. And they spent \$140.3 million last year, compared to \$112.3 million in 2013, a 25 percent hike. Officials estimate the total economic impact to the area at almost \$214 million in 2014.

Room nights totaled more than 15,000 last year, accounting for nearly \$10 million in direct spending, along with a corresponding increase in revenues derived from the hotel bed tax, otherwise known as the tourist development tax.

Starting in fiscal year 2012, TDT revenues have shot up from \$1.3 million to nearly \$1.8 million in 2014, based on a 3 percent hotel bed tax on accommodation stays six months or less, which is spent for tourism promotion and marketing support.

An additional 2 percent hotel bed tax is used to fund the bond debt for recent Charlotte Sports Park renovations. The TDT is in addition to the county's 7 percent sales tax.

Based on the total 5 percent TDT, Charlotte enjoyed a 38 percent increase in FY 2014, compared to the previous year. This growth outshines surrounding counties with much larger tourism budgets, including Manatee and Lee (16 percent increase), and Sarasota (15 percent).

"That's pretty incredible," said Chip Futch, tourism marketing director. "We are seeing outstanding, incredible growth throughout the county."

Moreover, Charlotte increased its in-state marketing budget by 12 percent, with a majority of these advertising dollars going toward electronic platforms, Futch said.

It is the area's natural beauty and laid-back lifestyle that serves as a magnet for travelers, Steiner said, with Charlotte County able to cash in on tourists' desire to experience a bit of Old Florida.

"We have something very special here," she said. "Our lack of congestion is what draws people to this area."

Charlotte also is not ignoring its far-away visitors, ranging from Ontario, Canada's quest for warmth to England's craving for sunshine to Germany's love of hiking and biking.

"We have a much bigger push in 2015 in the international market," Steiner said.

And with the increase in visitors comes a boost in the budget. In 2014 and 2015, the county's tourism bureau will spend more than \$1 million on advertising, alone.

And there is still more work to do.

Charlotte is launching a campaign to drive more visitors here during the off-season, seeking to balance out the tourist trade year-round. Also, there is an ongoing emphasis on sports events, which tend to be recession resistant and help fill rooms during the summer months.

As part of this effort, the tourism bureau supports the Charlotte Harbor Regatta and Snowbird Baseball Classic, along with fishing, gymnastics and softball tournaments. And there are new festivals in the offing, with a Brew, Blues & BBQ festival planned in Punta Gorda in June and another power boat race off Englewood Beach, now known as Waterfest, coming in November.

The business community is catching the wave and tapping into the flow of tourists, said Steiner, who lauded the Charlotte County Hospitality Association, in particular.

"I think that is one of the most important things happening for us," Steiner said.

## Warehouse sells for \$400,000

By Michael Braga , Herald-Tribune

NORTH PORT - A Venice company bought a 10,000- square-foot manufacturing warehouse on Trott Circle in this fast-growing city for \$400,000.

The buyer of the property at 5084 Trott Circle in North Port was FT Real Estate Sarasota

LLC, a Venice company managed by Frank Tenteromano, records show.

The seller was Charlotte Capital Inc., a North Port company managed by Douglas J. Bowering that paid \$250,000 in February 1995, records show.

Earlier this month, WINI Holdings LLLP, an Oshawa, Ontario, company, managed by William Boris Petron, bought a manufacturing warehouse in Sarasota for \$1.7 million, records show.

That 26,152-square-foot building at 1451 Global Court was sold by MacPhail Family Holdings LLC, a Bradenton company managed by Gordon A. MacPhail, records show.

MacPhail's company paid \$305,000 for the land in May 2003 and built the warehouse the following year. It sold the property for \$65 per square foot, records show.

## Workshop designed for entrepreneurs

Jean Kabongo, associate professor of strategic management and entrepreneurship at USF Sarasota-Manatee will conduct a free workshop for current and aspiring entrepreneurs at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the Robert L. Taylor Community Complex, 1845 34th St.

This workshop will discuss entrepreneurship, creativity, why innovation shapes the marketplace and developing and nurturing the innovative mindset.

For more information or to reserve a seat, contact Rowena Elliott at (941) 365-2200, Ext. 3220, or at [Rowena.elliott@sarasotagov.com](mailto:Rowena.elliott@sarasotagov.com).

## Session on Web strategies is set

Manasota SCORE will conduct a workshop on Websites to Attract Customers from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday at ComCenter, 9040 Town Center Parkway, Lakewood Ranch.

The workshop will teach people about developing a Web strategy so they can design and build a website that will attract traffic and lead to sales.

Register at [manasota.score.org/localworkshops](http://manasota.score.org/localworkshops). The \$25 fee can be paid online or at the event.

## Free1-HourSeminar - Reemployment Assistance Appeals

Attention Hiring Managers and HR Professionals!

This one-hour seminar will provide area employers with valuable information regarding the appeals process for Reemployment (Unemployment) Assistance in the State of Florida.

Delivered by representatives from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), the program will specifically benefit hiring managers and human resources professionals who manage Reemployment Assistance claims for their business. There will be a general overview of processes as well as a question and answer period.

DEO Program Presenters: Magnus Hines, Reemployment Assistance Appeals Manager  
The Honorable Frank E. Brown, Chairman, Reemployment Assistance Appeals Commission  
Seating is limited - To reserve your seat! Please call 239-931-8282 Ext 1803 Or  
[bussvc@careersourcesouthwestflorida.com](mailto:bussvc@careersourcesouthwestflorida.com).

Tuesday, January 27th, 1 p.m., CareerSource Southwest Florida, 4150 Ford Street Extension  
Fort Myers, FL 33916

- Florida's 'middle market' companies plan to invest and hire ([South Florida Sun-Sentinel](#))
- Manufacturing jobs pay more than others in Florida ([South Florida Sun-Sentinel](#))
- Dade OKs \$10M for planned movie studio ([Miami Herald](#))
- Enterprise Florida picks new CEO: Bill Johnson, Miami-Dade's port chief ([Miami Herald](#))
- Jobless number show promise for 2015 ([Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#))
- Florida unemployment rate falls to 5.6 percent ([Tampa Bay Times](#))
- Wawa seeks space to expand into South Florida ([South Florida Business Journal](#))

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## **US ECONOMIC NEWS**

- Gauge of US economy increases 0.5 percent in December ([Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#))
- US home sales rise in December ([Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#))

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## **ENTREPRENEUR NEWS**

- 10 people who will destroy your business ([Entrepreneur](#))

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