

# WEEKEND WAVE

11-20-15



## Friday Economic Roundup

### Cheney Brothers impact more than jobs

By Lucienne Pears Guest columnist Charlotte Sun

Much has been written and said about the impact of the recently opened Cheney Brothers distribution center in Charlotte County - and rightly so.

The 380 good-paying jobs it has committed to create is projected to keep growing as the company expands in Southwest Florida, providing a jolt to the local economy. But the construction itself and the long-lasting effects of the center's operation is an under-appreciated aspect of the project.

Construction of the more than \$40 million facility required a small army of contractors, subcontractors and support services that swelled the overall economic impact of the project. While much of the work went to local subcontractors, the sheer scope of the job required expertise, materials and manpower beyond what was available in the county. More than 30 subcontractors were tapped to construct the 350,000-square-foot distribution center on the 35-acre site. Twenty-eight of those providers were from the Southwest Florida region (Charlotte, Lee, Collier and Sarasota).

Those 28 subcontractors represent 150 people per day working on the project. That is the equivalent of a medium-sized company.

That is 150 people eating meals, buying gas, patronizing our local businesses and

purchasing supplies to complete their part of this massive project. Those supplies included 30,000 cubic yards of concrete, 250,000 cubic yards of fill dirt and 4,500 tons of asphalt, all purchased here in our community from our local businesses.

In addition, subcontractors occupied 300 hotel room nights at our local hotels. Speaking of hotel room nights, between the two out-of-state specialized trades that were hired, you can add an additional 500 hotel room nights, with three meals per day, fuel, services, etc. This list doesn't include the consultants hired for legal, environmental, geotechnical, construction management, site engineering, inspections and more.

In economic development this impact is called the indirect benefit. These benefits are the returns that cannot be directly observed but are nonetheless realized, attracting more jobs, more activity and more dollars into our community.

Company personnel, clients, suppliers and construction workers frequented Charlotte County airport via corporate jets.

Nearly two dozen company executives and managers have already relocated to the county, some buying existing homes, some building new ones, but all generating business for Realtors, contractors, furniture and retail stores, engineers, architects and other housing-related businesses and services.

Cheney Brothers also generated buzz in the Punta Gorda Interstate Airport Park area. An executive for the project's general contractor said his phone is "ringing off the hook" with inquiries from prospective development partners, business executives and media.

Affordable, pre-permitted and shovel-ready land near Cheney Brothers creates a fertile environment for additional distribution and warehousing businesses and supporting industries. Going forward, the operation of the distribution center will produce ongoing impacts. As many as 60 trucks a day will arrive at the facility to deliver goods. Their drivers will stoke recurring demand for hotels, restaurants and fueling stations. Operations and maintenance services will create opportunities for companies that perform landscaping, HVAC services and other work the company outsources. The presence of another major commercial food distributor will create a more competitive environment, helping to lower commercial food costs.

The story of Cheney Brothers in Charlotte County is two-fold: the economic development "win" it brings through construction and creation of a facility housing 380-plus employees and the community "win" that has brought tens of millions of dollars into our local economy.

Economic development is far-reaching in its benefits to the community, local businesses, schools and our region, and in sustaining the overall quality of life we all enjoy.

See for yourself, give Cheney a visit at their on-site cash-and-carry department, which is open to the public. Welcome to Charlotte County, Cheney Brothers. We are happy to have you.

## **Punta Gorda seeks bicycle-friendly status**

By BRENDA BARBOSA Staff Writer

PUNTA GORDA - After years of discussion over whether to pursue elite designation with a nationally recognized bicycling association, city leaders have finally agreed to lend financial backing to an initiative aimed at strengthening the city's bicycle chops.

In a unanimous show of support, city officials have agreed to join Team Punta Gorda and local cycling groups in applying for "Bicycle-Friendly Community" status from The League of American Cyclists. Only 16 other communities in the state enjoy that official designation.

The goal in applying for the designation is to be able to market the city to bicycle enthusiasts and recreational users who are interested in the bicycle culture. But to do that, said Team CEO Nancy Johnson, requires an additional investment in dedicated infrastructure and engineering.

"It's about building a bicycle culture for recreation and transportation," Johnson said. "It would certainly be an attraction for people moving into the city."

Johnson has presented a plan that included public-private collaboration across five areas: engineering, enforcement, education, evaluation and encouragement. When combined, each facet of the plan aims to create and encourage safe, accessible and sustainable bicycle use in the city.

With the city's support, Team and the other community partners can begin the process of putting together an application that will be submitted to The League of American Cyclist by January 2017.

"That gives us time to accomplish what we (ultimately) decide to do," she said.

Among the many infrastructure options are creating designated bicycle lanes with street markings that connect to the city's pathway system.

"Engineering is literally where the rubber meets the road," said city bicycle-friendly coordinator Mitch Austin. "In order for us to meet the criteria for bicycle-friendly status we

need to make certain infrastructure enhancements."

While city leaders have agreed to the plan in theory, they want to see the specific projects detailing actual costs.

At the same time, Team Punta Gorda is upping its profile in the city, with the unveiling next week of its new office space.

The Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce is hosting an event for the opening at the Charlotte Community Foundation, 227 Sullivan St., on Wednesday from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. An RSVP is requested at 941-6393720 or email [khill@puntagorda-chamber.com](mailto:khill@puntagorda-chamber.com).

## Airport bounces back after AirTran's exit

By Maggie Menderski Herald-Tribune

Three years after AirTran Airways left Sarasota-Bradenton International, the airport has finally recovered from the blow in terms of available flights.

Airport traffic is up 1.6 percent when compared with last year, and new flights beginning in December should foster a strong tourist season, airport CEO Frederick "Rick" Piccolo told the Sarasota-Manatee Airport Authority during Monday's bi-monthly meeting.

Local air traffic has increased 13 percent since AirTran, the airport's second-largest carrier at the time, abandoned Sarasota-Bradenton in July 2012. Overall air traffic in the United States has only increased 1 percent during the same period, Piccolo said.

"We did a good job of recovering from that, and we're pretty much back to where we were," Piccolo said.

On Monday, the airport authority also elected its new officers: Manatee County homebuilder Carlos Beruff, who has served on the board for six years, was unanimously voted chairman; John Stafford and past chairman Peter Wish were unanimously elected as vice chairman and secretary, respectively.

Growth this year has been evident, with new seasonal service to Newark, New Jersey, by United Airlines and weekend service to John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City with Delta Airlines. Air Canada announced year-round service this year, and WestJet will begin service in December. The airport already has handled more than a million passengers this year.

"There's been a herculean effort to attract and to increase the size of the in-plane passengers," Beruff said.

The authority also voted to extend its agreement with Uber through 2016. The authority agreed in July to allow the network transportation company to pick up passengers from the airport. The agreement, which was slated to expire at the end of the year, has worked well, Piccolo said. The service will continue as is through next year.

## Hands Across the Harbor January 30, 2016

The Charlotte Harbor and Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs) invite residents to participate in the 8th Annual Hands Across the Harbor - Half Marathon Bridge Run, Ride, and Roll.

The event will be on January 30, 2016 and features a half marathon, 5k competitive run, 13.1 mile competitive longboard race as well as 5k fun walk, 13.1, 20 and 30 mile bike rides.

This IDSA Sanctioned Longboard Race and the ½ Marathon will follow the same course that can be viewed at <http://www.walkjogrun.net>. Participants of the Longboard Race must be members of the International Distance Skateboard Association (IDSA) before registering. IDSA membership is available at <http://www.theidsa.org>.

Pre-registration for the ½ Marathon Run and Longboard Event is \$75 from now until January 15, 2016. Pre-registration special rates for all other events are \$30.00, or \$25.00 for students with an ID, through January 15, 2016. Rates go up for all events after that. This is a green event and we ask your help in making it a success by signing up online at <http://handsacrosstheharbor.org>.

Pre-registered participants will receive a high-performance t-shirt, free pancake breakfast, awards and a chance to win the Fabulous Getaway Prize - a two-night stay at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort and Spa plus a \$200 hotel gift card.

Proceeds from Hands Across the Harbor benefit the education programs at the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center. For more information, visit <http://www.handsacrosstheharbor.org/>.

## Enterprise Zone

To encourage economic development in economically distressed areas of the state, in

1982 Florida launched an Enterprise Zone program by providing incentives to induce private investment. At the 2015 legislative session, extension of the Enterprise Zone program was not authorized, and the program will sunset on Dec. 31, 2015.

Incentives include business machinery and equipment sales tax refund, building materials sales tax refund, job tax credit, and property tax credit for Florida corporations. To qualify for the incentives, a business or home must be within the Enterprise Zone, and further specific eligibility criteria must be met. The Charlotte County Enterprise Zone was approved by the state in 2013. The zone includes portions of the Punta Gorda Interstate Airport Park, Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Area (CRA), Parkside CRA, and Punta Gorda, totaling approximately 16 square miles.

Visit [http://FloridasInnovationCoast.com/index.php/site\\_selection/enterprise\\_zone](http://FloridasInnovationCoast.com/index.php/site_selection/enterprise_zone) for more information.

Applications must be approved by the Florida Department of Revenue before the sunset date.

For more information contact Debrah Forester, Redevelopment Manager with the Charlotte County Economic Development Department, at 941-764-4943 or [Debrah.Forester@CharlotteCountyFL.gov](mailto:Debrah.Forester@CharlotteCountyFL.gov).

## FLORIDA ECONOMIC NEWS

- Florida emerges as capital for private planes ([Palm Beach Post](#))
- USF to add College of Science & Mathematics ([Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#))
- Feld Entertainment to boost workforce 20% ([Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#))
- Florida continues all-time tourism record ([Florida Trend](#))
- Florida looks to benefit from space tourism ([Naples Daily News](#))
- Sarasota, Manatee see record tourism revenues ([Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#))
- Cargo increases at South Florida ports ([South Florida Sun-Sentinel](#))
- Software firm may bring office, jobs to Gainesville ([Gainesville Sun](#))
- Naples most economically dynamic small city in Florida ([Naples Daily News](#))
- Custom-home builder arrives from Orlando ([Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#))
- Florida unemployment rate hits 7-year low with spurt in job creation ([Tampa Bay Times](#))

## US ECONOMIC NEWS

- Manufacturing increases for first time in three months ([AP](#))

## ENTREPRENEUR NEWS

- Entrepreneurs use experience to teach at universities ([Orlando Sentinel](#))
- Clear clutter and streamline your business ([Jerry Osteryoung](#))
- Corporate filings at-a-glance ([Florida Small Business](#))
- Want to do business in Cuba? Focus on what island wants ([South Florida Sun-Sentinel](#))
- A capital idea: Small Business Administration programs help make loans possible ([Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#))

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