

WEEKEND WAVE

12-5-14



Friday Economic Roundup

AREA NEWS

First Wawa in region set to open on Dec. 18

By Justine Griffin Sarasota Herald-Tribune

BRADENTON - The first Wawa south of St. Petersburg will open in Bradenton on Dec. 18.

The convenience store and gas station at 701 First St. E. is the first of several stores the company plans to open in the region.

A ribbon-cutting is planned for 10 a.m. on Dec. 18.

Wawa has a cult-like following similar to the fans of Trader Joe's and Costco Wholesale, which opened their first stores in Southwest Florida in 2012.

The privately held, Pennsylvania-based company has been aggressively expanding in Florida. Executives have said they want to open a dozen stores in the Orlando and Tampa markets. Three stores are in the works in Manatee County.

"This significant step in our Florida expansion symbolizes our continued commitment to invest in the state and continue to fulfill customers' lives every day, through our economic and community impact," Wawa spokeswoman Colleen Labik said.

Wawa will hold a "Finest vs. Bravest" hoagie- building contest at the Bradenton store during the grand opening. In these contests, teams of five people from the local fire and police departments compete to see who can build the most sandwiches in three minutes using the traditional Wawa method.

Wawa will donate \$1,000 to the charity of the winner's choice and another \$1,000 to the second- place winner's charity.

The Suncoast Mummers String Band of Bradenton will perform on opening day. Wawa will donate to the Mummer's scholarship fund.

Wawa is known for its cheap gas and restaurant-quality sandwich bar, fresh salads, breakfast bowls, signature coffees and smoothies, among other items not commonly seen at convenience stores. The stores also carry traditional convenience-store goods, including drinks, snacks and cigarettes.

The chain submitted site plans to build three Sarasota stores, including a 6,119- square-foot gas station at the northwest corner of U.S. 301 and Myrtle Street.

The convenience store and gas station company plans to build similar-sized stores with 16 gas pumps on University Parkway at the southwest corner of Honore Avenue and another at Tamiami Trail and Englewood Road in Venice.

\$2 million sale of 160 acres in Punta Gorda

By Michael Braga Sarasota Herald-Tribune

Steve Eckhardt, who manages Cornerstone Properties International, brokered the sale of 160 acres on Jones Loop Road in Punta Gorda.

OB 4 LLC was the buyer, J.W.Sheffer Trust,

The price was \$2,007,125.

The land is located minutes from I-75 East of the Punta Gorda Airport. It is currently zoned Agricultural but was marketed for residential development.

FLORIDA ECONOMIC NEWS

- Alico buying three Florida citrus producers for \$363 million ([Tampa Bay Times](#))
- Optimism on the rise among Florida businesses ([Tampa Bay Business Journal](#))
- Film Florida's new strategy for statewide incentives ([Orlando Business Journal](#))

US ECONOMIC NEWS

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- Mortgage rates fall again ([Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#))
- US hiring was likely solid for 10th straight month ([Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#))

ENTREPRENEUR NEWS

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- To grow business, step outside of your comfort zone and try new strategies ([Florida Trend](#))
- How to Make Someone Want to Do Business With You ([Entrepreneur](#))

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