



Welcome to Charlotte County Economic Development Office Newsletter

Please enjoy your copy of the Charlotte County Economic Development Office Newsletter. If you need any further information, please feel free to contact our office at 941-764-4941 or at FloridaEDO@charlottefl.com.

I Want ____ in my Neighborhood

For the past month, residents and visitors have been sharing ideas on the "I want _____ in my Neighborhood Stickers" that are posted on the vacant storefront between Winn Dixie and Tuesday Morning in the Promenades Mall. Almost 600 stickers have been filled out with ideas ranging from specific establishments like Trader Joes, Chipotle, and Sweet Tomatoes to generic types of establishments - café, ice cream shop, and pizza shops. To date, there is an interesting mix of suggestions and the results provide some insight into what retail establishments the community feels are missing in the area.



Trader Joe's -
The top choice

While there is an opportunity to recruit regional and national chains to the center, there is also room for local startup businesses or existing businesses looking to expand to consider locating in the Promenades Mall. The Mall has been the center of retail activity in Port Charlotte for many years and it is an important economic driver for the Parkside Community Redevelopment Area (CRA). Adding to the existing mix of retail uses will continue to revitalize the center and the area. "In-Rel Properties which purchased the center in 2011 has been a great partner to work with and we look forward to continuing this partnership to achieve the goals of the Parkside CRA Citizens Master Plan" stated Commissioner Trisha Duffy.

Sharing and supporting great ideas is the goal of the project. We hope the stickers will help to spark the conversation and bring people together.

Doug Brewer, Executive VP of Operations for In-Rel Properties said "We look forward to the final results of the Sticker Campaign and were particularly impressed with the level of interest the campaign generated within the business community.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

*Charlotte County New
Business Tax Receipts*

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UPCOMING EVENTS

January 1 - EDO closed New Year's Day

January 6 - Charlotte Harbor CRA Advisory Committee Meeting 10:30 AM, Room 119

January 9 - ECEC Meeting (Call for Information)

January 13 - Murdock Village CRA, EDO Conference Room 302, 5 PM

January 15 - IDA Meeting CANCELED

January 16 - Enterprise Zone Development Agency Meeting, Noon at the EDO Conference Room 302

January 20 - EDO closed for Martin Luther King Day

January 21 - Suncoast Technology Forum Luncheon,

Hands Across The Harbor

The Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency, the Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency, and Waste Management of Charlotte County invite you to join the healthy living movement by participating in the 5th Annual Hands Across the Harbor event on **Saturday, January 26**.



Register Today to Save \$5
Early Registration ends Thursday - January 24
Early Registration is \$19
(\$14 for Students with valid Student ID)
Register today at www.handsacrosstheharbor.com

Proceeds from the Hands Across the Harbor event will benefit the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center (CHEC). For the past 20 years, CHEC has focused on educating the public on the complex and fragile ecosystem of Charlotte Harbor and its tributaries. Established in 1987 to promote environmental conservation, protection and preservation of the natural resources, the non-profit organization provides environmental education, recreation, environmental research, and conservation lands management services to residents and visitors to the region.

Registration begins at 6:45 a.m. with the event starting at 8:00 a.m. The route starts at the Bayshore Live Oak Park in Charlotte County, crossing the Gilchrist Bridge into downtown Punta Gorda. The celebration will continue back at Bayshore Live Oak Park with breakfast, awards, door prizes, and entertainment. Participants can choose a 10 or 20 mile bike ride; an 8K competitive run; or a 5K walk.

Same day registration is \$24 (\$16 for Students)

The first 300 Registered Participants receive a Hands Across the Harbor T-shirt. All participants will get a chance to win the Fabulous Getaway Raffle Prize. The Fabulous Getaway Raffle Prize includes a two night stay at the Royal Plaza Resort - an official Disney Resort plus a \$200 gift card. The second place raffle prize is a 19" television. Extra Raffle Tickets will be available for purchase (3 tickets for \$5). You must be 18 years old and present to win the Raffle Prize.

Register today at www.handsacrosstheharbor.com

See you on **January 26!**

Florida 50 Companies to Watch

On October 24th Kay Tracy from Charlotte County's Economic Development Office attended GrowFL's recognition of Arcadia Aerospace

Polo Bar & Grill, Lakewood Ranch, 11:30 - 1 PM

January 25 - 6th Annual Hands Across the Harbor

February 3 - Charlotte Harbor CRA Advisory Committee Meeting 10:30 AM, Room 119

February 6 - ECEC Meeting (Call for Information)

February 6 - Hottest Business Day in Paradise

February 17 - EDO closed for President's Day

February 18 - Suncoast Technology Forum Luncheon, Polo Bar & Grill, Lakewood Ranch, 11:30 - 1 PM

February 19 - IDA Meeting Noon at the EDO Conference Room 302

March 3 - Charlotte Harbor CRA Advisory Committee Meeting 10:30 AM, Room 119

March 6 - ECEC Meeting (Call for Information)

March 18 - Suncoast Technology Forum Luncheon, Polo Bar & Grill, Lakewood Ranch, 11:30 - 1 PM

March 19 - IDA Meeting Noon at the EDO Conference Room 302

April 3 - ECEC Meeting (Call for Information)

April 7 - Charlotte Harbor CRA Advisory Committee Meeting 10:30 AM, Room 119

April 14 - Murdock Village CRA, EDO Conference Room 302, 5 PM

April 15 - Suncoast Technology Forum Luncheon, Polo Bar & Grill, Lakewood Ranch, 11:30 - 1 PM

April 16 - IDA Meeting Noon at the EDO Conference Room 302

at the Hard Rock Live in Orlando. This Punta Gorda Company was among 49 other second-stage companies, celebrated for their achievements and bright future for continued growth as Florida's 50 Companies to Watch!

GrowFL and the University of Central Florida distinguish this honor as a testament to the commitment of community partners to Florida businesses across the state. The award only goes to a hand full of Florida second-stage companies selected for their impressive employment rates, revenue growth, entrepreneurial leadership, product innovation, social/community responsibility and competitive business practices.

These companies project continued growth in 2013, with a 30 percent revenue increase and 23 percent growth in job creation (both in Florida and out of state) compared to 2012.

For more information, please contact Kay Tracy in the Charlotte County Economic Development Office 941-764-4944.

Microenterprise Institute of Goodwill SWFL

On October 15, 2013, Kay Tracy from Charlotte County's Economic Development Office attended the second graduating class of the Southwest Florida Microenterprise Institute's in Charlotte County.

This year 10 entrepreneurs took a six week course designed to assist their small business in developing a feasibility plan which aids these young companies in marketing their prospective product or service. The individual is then connected with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to continue to develop their feasibility plan into a full business plan.

Recently, the Microenterprise Institute announced their new Microloan program. This program was designed to help their graduates apply locally for a character based business loan to benefit the launch of their new enterprise.

For more information contact Dorothy Browning at: dorothybrowning@goodwillswfl.org

SWFL Blue Chip Community Business Award

On Nov. 7th at Harborside Event Center in Fort Myers, Kay Tracy from the Charlotte County Economic Development Office attended the 19th Annual Southwest Florida Blue Chip Community Business Award luncheon which recognized regionally successful small business owners as they share their stories about how they turned around their own adversity to achieve success in private enterprise with the hope that others will learn from their experiences.

Independent judges from the region selected and recognized regional business owner applications from Charlotte, Lee, and Collier Counties. The finalists for this year included: Ardent Manor, Direct Access, Gatsby's Pizza, Purely You Spa, and East West Veterinary. The 2013 winner was East West Veterinary.

April 17 - Enterprise Zone Development Agency Meeting, Noon at the EDO Conference Room 302

May 1 - ECEC Meeting (Call for Information)

May 5 - Charlotte Harbor CRA Advisory Committee Meeting 10:30 AM, Room 119

May 20 - Suncoast Technology Forum Luncheon, Polo Bar & Grill, Lakewood Ranch, 11:30 - 1 PM

May 21 - IDA Meeting Noon at the EDO Conference Room 302

May 26 - EDO closed for Memorial Day

June 2 - Charlotte Harbor CRA Advisory Committee Meeting 10:30 AM, Room 119

June 5 - ECEC Meeting (Call for Information)

June 17 - Suncoast Technology Forum Luncheon, Polo Bar & Grill, Lakewood Ranch, 11:30 - 1 PM

June 18 - IDA Meeting Noon at the EDO Conference Room 302

[View More Events](#)
on our
[Web Site](#)

If you have business related events you would like listed on our web site's Calendar of Events, please email them to our [webmaster](#).

Charlotte County businesses recognized for the award in recent years include: Monty's Pizza, Service Master, The Bicycle Shop and Stan's Coffey Service.

BB&T-Oswald Trippe and Company and BB&T Bank sponsor the competition each year, endorsed by regional partners including: The Charlotte County Economic Development Office, Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce, Edison State College, Englewood-Cape Haze Area Chamber of Commerce, Florida Gulf Coast University, and the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce.

2014 Blue Chip Award Nominations will be opening soon to companies that meet the following criteria: for-profit business; operating under the same ownership for at least three continuous years with the principal office located in Charlotte, Lee, or Collier Counties; employs five to 400 people; and has overcome adversity to achieve success.

Applications can be requested by contacting Stacey Mercado at 239-433-7189 or SMercado@BBandT.com. Business owners may nominate themselves or be nominated by someone else. Assistance is available to draft applications.

Enterprise Zone Incentives & Entrepreneurial Support 101

On November 20th, at the Charlotte Harbor Event Center Kay Tracy and Debrah Forester from the Charlotte County Economic Development Office offered small businesses and Enterprise Zone property owners, an informational program titled, "Enterprise Zone Incentives and Entrepreneurial Support 101." The program included a presentation by Tom Johnson, CMI, who provided details on how to take advantage of cost saving measures regarding properties located in the Charlotte County Enterprise Zone and other tax breaks available for manufacturers and printers. Mr. Johnson has over 25 years of experience in state and local tax issues. As a former tax auditor with the Florida Department of Revenue, Mr. Johnson provided valuable insight into tax issues facing local businesses.

In addition to a presentation on the Enterprise Zone, representatives from the Small Business Development Center, Southwest Florida Works and MicroEnterprise/Goodwill Industries of SWFL gave an overview of their Entrepreneur support programs offered to small local businesses. The event was free to the public.

If you are an Entrepreneur, Business or Land Owner in an Enterprise Zone, Commercial Realtor, Banker, Manufacturer, Commercial Accountant, or Printer, and would like details about available programs to grow businesses in our community, please contact Kay Tracy in the Charlotte County Economic Development Office 941-764-4944.

Should the Charlotte County Economic Development Office Continue to Produce a Quarterly Newsletter?

[Please take the survey.](#)

Foreign Consulates & International Chamber Luncheon

Tom Patton, Economic Director, and Lucienne Pears, Business Recruitment Supervisor, in partnership with the Lee County EDO, Hendry County EDC, FGCU and the Small Business Development Center attended a luncheon meet and greet hosted by EFI on December 17th. Foreign representatives included: the Consul General and Senior Trade Commissioners of Canada, the Consul General and the Trade Commissioner of Chile, the Trade Commissioner and the Deputy Consul of Italy, the Consul General of France, the Vice-Consul of Germany, and the Sr VP of the Banco de la Nacion Argentina.

The luncheon meeting was hosted by Enterprise Florida's International group in Miami. The purpose of the meeting was to gain information from each of the countries about the most active industry sectors in each country, what their needs and interests are and for the EDO representatives to provide an overview of each community and what they have to offer to potential foreign companies looking to expand or relocate to the US.

Manufacturer's Association of Florida Annual Meeting

Lucienne Pears, Business Recruitment Supervisor, attended the 10th Annual Manufacturers Summit on December 5 and 6th in St Petersburg. The Manufacturers Association of Florida (MAF) was organized in early 2006 to improve Florida's manufacturing business climate. MAF is comprised of manufacturers and those who serve them who want to set the direction of manufacturing policy in the State of Florida.

The highlight of the event each year is the Awards Dinner in which manufacturers within the State are recognized for such things as; best practices, growth, innovation and contribution to improving manufacturing in the State of Florida. Arcadia Aerospace, located at the Punta Gorda airport, was one of several companies receiving accolades as Manufacturer of the year. Congratulations Arcadia Aerospace!

Nonprofit Network Luncheon

Lucienne Pears was invited to speak at the Nonprofit Network (NPN) luncheon meeting on November 21st. The purpose of the meeting was to begin to explore and develop action items for the "next steps" for our community based on the results of the 2013 Community Needs Assessment study prepared and published by the United Way. The NPN is developing an entire community-wide process to bring pieces together and to look forward to create a cohesive plan for the County. Speakers

included leaders from Charlotte County Community Services, the Homeless Coalition, One Charlotte, the Charlotte Community Foundation, Parkside CRA and Team Punta Gorda.

EFI Stakeholders & Board Meeting

Lucienne Pears, Business Recruitment Supervisor, attended the October quarterly meeting of the Enterprise Florida Board and Stakeholders interest meetings in Coral Gables. Economic Development leaders from both private and public sectors, including FPL, Duke Energy, The Hub, Department of Economic Opportunity and local and regional EDO partners gathered at this quarterly event for a series of Stakeholder interest meetings followed by the Enterprise Florida Board meeting hosted by Governor Rick Scott and the Secretary of Commerce, Gray Swoope.

Presentations include Enterprise Zone discussions, Strategic Marketing, Community Competitiveness and Legislative issues affecting economic development in the State. The [2012 - 2013 Annual report](#) was also released at the October meeting as well as a snapshot of [Enterprise Florida's activities](#).

CoreNet Global North American Summit

Lucienne Pears, Business Recruitment Supervisor, is tasked with implementing the Strategic Marketing plan for the Economic Development Office. Part of this strategy includes attending meetings and conferences to initiate and continue to grow relationships with Site Selection consultants and to market the value of Charlotte County to potential business prospects.

One of the premier Site Consultant organizations and events is the CoreNet Global North American Summit, held October 20-24. CoreNet Global's mission is to advance the effectiveness of Corporate Real Estate professionals and the entire industry engaged in delivering value to corporations through the strategic management of corporate real estate and workplace resources. CoreNet Global is the world's leading association for corporate real estate (CRE) and workplace professionals, service providers and economic developers. Over 7,000 members, who include 70% of the Fortune 100 and nearly half of the Forbes Global 2000, meet locally, globally and virtually to develop networks, share knowledge, learn and thrive professionally.

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