



CHARLOTTE COUNTY
Economic Development

WEEKEND WAVE



Friday Economic Roundup

AREA NEWS

Fat Point Brewing at 100 percent

By PAUL FALLON CHARLOTTE SUN, STAFF WRITER - JULY 12, 2014

PUNTA GORDA - After months of work, Fat Point Brewing's production operation is now 100 percent up and running.

The new system went on line Wednesday, and the two founders are working to come up with locations where their beer will be available. Beer produced with a smaller system has been available at

Opus in downtown Punta Gorda for several weeks. However the beer-brewing duo, Bill Frazer and Duncan Scarry, plan to distribute their beer to 10 to 12 locations in Charlotte County, 20 to 25 locations in Lee County, and 20 to 25 locations in the Sarasota/ Manatee county area by early to mid-August, Frazer said.

"We don't have any set locations yet," Scarry said. "We've talked to more than a dozen people about selling our beer, but we just have to work those relationships out."

The pair also want to make sure the quality of their product - the beer - remains consistent, along with ensuring they have the capacity to provide ample beverages to the locations that are selected to distribute the beer, Frazer said.

Along with distributing to local bars and restaurants, the pair also plan to open up a tasting room in the front of the brewery, located at 611 Charlotte St., Punta Gorda. "We should have our tasting room open in September," Scarry said.

Like with most breweries, the tasting room will be a place where patrons can gather to sample beers made on the spot. It will feature a bar, as well as glass windows, where people can view the brewing process.

The tasting room also will be the spot where patrons can obtain brews not available in other restaurants and bars, Frazer said.

"We'll have one beer to distribute, and the other beers will be for our tap room," he said.

The pair plan to hold an event at the brewery before the tasting room opens. They also will hold an event starting at 3 p.m. Aug. 2 at TT's Tiki Bar on Charlotte Harbor.

"We'll be putting that information up on our Facebook page," Frazer said.

The brewery also had a beer available at Harpoon Harry's during the Freedom Swim on the Fourth of July.

Although the brewery just now has gone to full production and the tasting room has yet to open its doors, the pair already have had an outpouring of support from members of the community, Frazer said.

"The whole town has flocked to this brand," Scarry said.

He added that the "positivity" exhibited by the community members made it easier to continue to invest in the brewery.

The duo opted to begin brewing because they love beer and wanted to be in business for themselves, Scarry said.

They currently have produced a Ryght Angle IPA, which is a rye India pale ale. The IPA is their flagship beer, and has become very popular since it made its debut, Scarry said.

"It's not as hoppy as other IPAs," he said. "People that don't like IPAs like this beer."

The two aren't married to a specific style of beer for the future, Frazer said. They both like all different styles of beer, and they produce beers they like.

"And we want to produce what our customers like," Frazer said.

For more information, visit www.fatpoint.com, or find Fat Point Brewing on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FatPointBrewing.

APG named a finalist of the top 50 companies to watch

Aviation Partners Group (APG) announces it has been selected as one of the finalist for the GrowFL - Top 50 Companies to Watch Award. Winners will be announced August 8th and will be honored at a gala on October 23, at Hard Rock Live! in Orlando, Florida from 5:30pm - 8:30pm EST.

Eligibility criteria includes: second stage company with less than 100 employees; annual revenue between \$1- \$50 million; ability to sell outside of Florida. Applicants must also be in one of the following target industries: manufacturing, finance and insurance services, wholesale trade, information industries, professional/scientific/technical services, management services, administrative and support services.

APG is the parent company of APG's five subsidiaries, including APG Avionics, APG Aviation, APG Rotables, APG NEBO Services, and APG Airpark Realty. The APG family consists of locations in Punta Gorda and in Europe. APG's U.S. customers include three local sheriff's offices, flight training schools, the Civil Air Patrol, Fly BVI Caribbean charters, private jet owners as well as several warbird collectors.

APG is a global avionics supplier of weather mapping systems, radars, TCAS, glass displays, satellite phones, entertainment systems and WiFi systems. APG is a Platinum Dealer for Garmin and an Elite Dealer for Avidyne. APG is also an authorized dealer for BOSE, Honeywell, Bendix-King, David Clark, Mid-Continent Instruments, ACR Electronics (ARTEX), FreeFlight Systems, L3 Communications, etc.

APG's Maintenance Department has A&P/IA staff with 75+ years of experience on an array of aircraft from light turbine equipment to piston aircraft, APG manages various maintenance and repair needs from minor line service/maintenance to heavy maintenance and inspections - annual/phase.

APG meets all scheduled and unscheduled maintenance needs, in a time frame that's works for their

customers. The maintenance and repair facility offers a customer lounge stocked with several comforts such as snacks, beverages, TV, DVD player and Wi-Fi access so pilots/owners can stay connected. APG also provides shuttle service within a 30 mile radius.

In the European market, APG has worked closely with UT Air to upgrade 32 United Nations helicopters getting in compliance with the mandate that an all terrain awareness system (TAWS) be installed. APG is scheduled to install the TAWS system in another 26 helicopters.

APG is contracted with Italian-based, OMA SUD Sky Technologies to assemble and complete the SKYCAR, a twin engine, 5 place aircraft. Components of the SKYCAR are shipped to our avionics hangar at the Punta Gorda Airport where it is assembled, the avionics installed and it is completed for flight testing.

APG also installs avionics equipment in various aircraft, from war birds to business jets to helicopters. Other services provided include avionics sales, parts sales, general aircraft maintenance, repair, annual inspections, certifications, vibration analysis, and propeller balancing.

Sports' draw giving area tourism new life

By Justine Griffin, Herald-Tribune, Published: Wednesday, July 16, 2014 at 11:20 p.m.

LAKEWOOD RANCH - More people are coming to this area, and local tourism officials say they plan to keep it that way.

In May, Sarasota County collected more than \$1 million in tourism taxes - a first for the month - at a time when tourism typically slows at the end of the winter and spring seasons.

Overall, the number of visitors was up by 8 percent for the month, and their direct spending was up by 13 percent.

The surge is thanks in part to the growing segment of sports-related tourism events, Virginia Haley, president of Visit Sarasota County, said Wednesday at a luncheon event for the Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance.

There are more than 100 different sporting events lined up for 2014.

"The next time you hear someone tell you sports tourism doesn't generate enough economic impact, tell them they've fallen off their rocker," said Nicole Rissler, director of sports with Visit Sarasota County, the county's tourism agency.

Nationally, the sports tourism segment generates more than \$8 billion in economic impact in the United States, according to Sports Events Magazine, a trade publication.

That same magazine recently ranked Sarasota County as top sports destination in the country, Rissler said.

"That is huge," she said. "And we hope to continue to build on what we've already created."

In 2013, sports tourism generated \$71 million in economic impact for the region, Visit Sarasota data show, including a total of 67,000 hotel room nights.

Events like the 2013 Pan American Swimming Championships (it drew more than 1,000 competitors from different countries to Sarasota County for a week) and the U.S. Rowing Masters Championships (which brought national rowing contenders to Benderson Park for several days) helped drive those numbers, Rissler said.

Overall, 2013 saw a 22 percent rise in tourism traffic thanks to the sports competition.

This year, tourism officials predict a slightly lower \$50 million economic impact, but with about 70,000 hotel room nights booked overall. The impact dropped slightly because the region is hosting fewer international events, but Rissler said that comes with the turf.

"It's important that we keep our existing annual sporting events here while managing to bid on other events," she said.

This year, Southwest Florida hosted:

* The YMCA Masters National Swimming Championships, at the recently renovated Selby Aquatic Center

* The Sunshine State Games, which drew more than 3,000 participants from across Florida.

* The BMX State Games at the Sarasota BMX Park, which is slated for a million-dollar renovation.

* The World Cup Final for Modern Pentathlon, which will return in February and again in 2016.

* Prospect Wire State Finals, which drew 140 youth baseball teams.

More events, including collegiate, national and international rowing, golf and soccer events, are slated to come to Southwest Florida in 2015 and beyond.

"With our growing inventory of impressive venues, we can keep hosting events like these," Rissler said.

Sarasota County sells land to Benderson for \$3M

By DREW WINCHESTER STAFF WRITER, CHARLOTTE SUN

SARASOTA COUNTY - County commissioners have sold a 41-acre property valued at \$4.5 million to Benderson Development for \$3 million, with an eye toward developing 200,000 square feet of light industrial space within the first six months.

Benderson originally offered \$2.5 million for the property, located just east of Interstate 75 on Fruitville Road in Sarasota, but upped its offer to \$3 million and included a \$1 million guarantee if they failed to move forward with developing the site.

Benderson vice president Larry Fineberg promised the industrial park would attract "first-class tenants" and give Sarasota County the chance to offer new space for existing, successful companies.

"We're proposing what might be the nicest light industrial park in the country," Fineberg said.

Commissioners approved the sale 3-2 last week, with Charles Hines and Nora Patterson dissenting.

The property, which will soon sit across the street from a massive Bass Pro Shops retail store, was undersold to Benderson, according to Patterson, who envisioned Bass Pro being the engine that drives development in the corridor.

Patterson hoped the commission would wait until the economy recovered further, and then sell the property to a higher bidder.

"I believe all of it will become more expensive in the next year or two," she said, adding, "I think it's a mistake to sell at this price."

But, Commissioner Joe Barbetta argued that selling the property to Benderson would benefit the county by putting it on the tax rolls and creating more revenue. Commissioners were also investing in the county, Barbetta said, and allows for job creation and support of existing companies.

"I'd rather keep them than lose them. We've lost companies we shouldn't have lost because we didn't have the space to keep them," Barbetta said.

Hines argued that Bass Pro Shops will be its own catalyst for the area and suggested keeping the property, but in the end, commissioners approved the sale.

Commissioner Christine Robinson, who said the sale price gave her "heartburn," agreed to sell because of the county's needs right now, not somewhere down the line.


"We're selling it based on the concerns of the area," she said.

FLORIDA ECONOMIC NEWS

- Florida's aircraft manufacturing industry taking off ([Florida Trend](#))
- Florida aims to be HQ for driverless cars ([First Coast News](#))
- Tampa trade mission to Chile set ([The Tampa Tribune](#))
- Florida among most popular states for workers ([Orlando Business Journal](#))
- 'Discover Florida Wild' is a new state website promoting outdoor tourism ([Palm Beach Post](#))
- Study supports getting onboard with financial literacy education ([Huffington Post](#))
- Governor Scott makes big jobs announcement ([WINK News](#))

US ECONOMIC NEWS

- The business cost of climate change: what the science says ([The Guardian](#))
- US retail sales tick up just 0.2 percent in June ([Herald-Tribune](#))
- US homebuilder confidence surges in July ([Herald-Tribune](#))
- Pet amenities a rising trend for home builders ([AP](#))
- Unemployment aid applications drop to 302,000 ([Miami Herald](#))



Join Our Mailing List!

Charlotte County Economic Development Office

18501 Murdock Circle | Suite 302
Port Charlotte, FL 33948 | 941-764-4941

floridaedo@charlottefl.com

<http://www.floridasinnovationcoast.com>

