

WEEKEND WAVE

08-26-16



Friday Economic Roundup

Cheney Bros Exceeds Expectations

CHARLOTTE COUNTY, Fla. (Aug. 22, 2016) - Cheney Brothers Inc. has exceeded all anticipated hiring and job creation goals established at the start of the distribution center project. The Charlotte County Economic Development Office assisted Cheney Brothers with applications and support for incentives from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity and the Florida Department of Transportation in return for specific capital improvement and job creation conditions.

The Florida Department of Transportation committed to reimburse Charlotte County up to \$722,000 for the construction of Cheney Way in return for Cheney Brothers beginning vertical construction prior to May 30, 2015. The company received its certificate of occupancy for the facility and began operations in October 2015.

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity approved Cheney Brothers for participation in the Brownfields Redevelopment Bonus Program with the condition that it create at least 380 jobs at the Charlotte County location within five years. Cheney Brothers



exceeded this commitment within two years and to date has created more than 380 jobs, and is still growing.

"We could not be more pleased by the success of our distribution center in Charlotte County. We established a goal to have 380 employees at our Punta Gorda facility by December of 2019. I am very proud to announce that we have met our hiring goals three years early." said Byron Russell, CEO and chairman of the board of Cheney Brothers.

"Cheney's success can be attributed to sound leadership, super employees, a community that has been with us every step of the way and a public sector that knows how to get things done," said Director of Development Warren Newell.

Here is your Charlotte County e-Survey, "20 Questions"

Recently, you received a "heads up" about an important e-Survey called "20 Questions." This is a branding survey for the Charlotte County Economic Development Office. Ultimately, your answers will help us create a new brand identity and marketing aimed at companies planning to relocate or expand. **You can access that survey now on the link below.**



This "20 Questions" survey is anonymous. It's designed to produce meaningful data with minimal time required. Please take a few moments and complete it now. On behalf of the Charlotte County Economic Development Office, thank you!

Survey will be available until September 2, 2016.

<http://floridasinnovationcoast.com/survey>

Lucienne Pears
Director
Charlotte County Economic Development Office

County, School District to exchange Murdock Village land

By GARY ROBERTS STAFF WRITER

MURDOCK - Charlotte County and the School Board have agreed to swap parcels in Murdock Village, making it easier for the county to entice a major development to the long-dormant property.

In return for a 41-acre area off Flamingo Road, the county will receive 35 acres adjacent to North Charlotte Regional Park. Lucienne Pears, county economic development director, said potential developers have often asked about the availability of the 35-acre site, which could become the centerpiece of an even larger tract targeted for improvements.

"It made this area more cohesive for development and with better access from U.S. 41," she said.

The deal, which still must be finalized, also would benefit Charlotte County Public Schools by providing access to Flamingo Boulevard, which eventually would connect to both U.S. 41 and State Road 776. Although Flamingo Boulevard currently stops just short of S.R. 776, the county master plan calls for the roads to be linked in the future. Facing declining enrollments, the School Board is in no hurry to develop the site, bordered by Buena Vista Circle, Butler Street, Odin Avenue and Flamingo Boulevard.

Any development rights currently held by the school district would also be transferred to the new lot.

"It's an opportunity for us as a district to get a piece of property that, if it becomes a school, it would be in a better location," CCPS Assistant Superintendent Jerry Olivo said. "The area the district owns currently abuts a service road off U.S. 41 and is in a more commercial district, which is a little more problematic."

The school district has owned the current 35-acre property since 2005 as one of several unimproved properties scattered across the county that could accommodate future growth.

County commissioners, convening Aug. 11 at a special meeting of the Murdock Village Community Redevelopment Agency, approved moving forward with the transfer. Two days earlier at their regular meeting, School Board members agreed to the exchange. County officials first requested the trade late last year, when a developer pitched an idea that included the 35-acre site, located between U.S. 41 and the North Charlotte Regional Park,

from O'Donnell Boulevard to Charles Street, minus a strip of privately owned properties on the south side of U.S. 41.

Although this deal fell through, other proposals have come forward seeking the same piece of land.

"We have had several other developments taking an interest in the property," Pears said.

The key advantage of the future county site is that it abuts O'Donnell Boulevard, which is one of only a few streets with full access to the newly expanded, but now median-divided, U.S. 41.

At last week's Murdock Village CRA meeting, Commissioner Stephen R. Deutsch said the property exchange would enhance the county's ability to spur growth.

"This is a win-win.

This is definitely a plus for us in terms of moving ahead with some of our potential suitors for Murdock Village," Deutsch said.

"The swap adds to the marketing value of Murdock Village."

With a 30-day notice required before the land swap can be completed, the Murdock Village CRA will meet Sept. 22 to formally approve the exchange.

Murdock Village, an 1,100-acre tract between U.S. 41 and S.R. 776, was purchased by the county more than a decade ago for \$117 million to consolidate the land and sell it for development.

However, due to the collapse of the real estate market, the land has remained idle ever since, with Charlotte taxpayers continuing to pay interest on the money borrowed to buy the property. Today, Murdock Village has cost the county a total of \$140 million and still owes \$39 million in financial debt.

22nd Annual Blue Chip Community Business Award

The 22nd annual Southwest Florida Blue Chip Community Business Award, coordinated and sponsored by BB&T- Oswald Trippe and Company and BB&T Bank will take place Thursday, Nov. 3 at Harborside Event Center, located at 1375 Monroe Street in Fort Myers. The annual Blue Chip Award program recognizes successful, small business owners who have overcome adversity to achieve success.

Larry Brudnicki, legendary U.S. Coast Guard Captain, has been selected as the keynote speaker for the 22nd Annual Southwest Florida Blue Chip Community Award luncheon.

Captain Brudnicki was the Commanding Officer of the USCGC TAMAROA in New Castle, NH where he performed two dramatic rescues during the worst weather in more than 100 years. This event became known as "The Perfect Storm" and inspired The New York Times best-selling book and the blockbuster movie starring George Clooney and Mark Wahlberg.

Captain Brudnicki retired from the Coast Guard in March 2002 after 30 years of active duty. During his career he supervised more than 15,000 search and rescue cases, which saved property valued at \$135 million and more than 1,600 lives. He also supervised the search for survivors of the Alaska Air Flight #261 tragedy.

Brudnicki holds a Merchant Marine Master's license and has won numerous awards for his accomplishments including, the Legion of Merit, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (two time winner), the Coast Guard Commendation Medal (four time winner), the Air Force Commendation Medal, the Coast Guard Achievement Medal and the Humanitarian Service Medal (two time winner).

Now that he has retired, Brudnicki uses the experience he gained from leading successful high-risk missions with international visibility to deliver his message of leadership, teamwork and risk management. Brudnicki speaks to corporations, associations and organizations so that they can implement the steps necessary for success while avoiding pitfalls.

Charlotte, Collier and Lee County for-profit businesses that have been in operation for at least three years under the same ownership and employ five to 400 people are eligible for the Blue Chip Award. Applications must be submitted no later than Sept. 6, 2016 and independent judges will select the winning entry.

For information on attending the Blue Chip Award program or for submitting an application, please contact Stacey Mercado at 239- 433-7189 or SMercado@BBandT.com.

- Education critical for Florida's economy ([South Florida Sun-Sentinel](#))
- Tampa business group gets \$1 million to attract Israeli startups ([Tampa Bay Business Journal](#))
- Manufacturer to move HQ to Central Florida ([Orlando Business Journal](#))
- Heico Corp. reports \$42 million in profits ([Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#))

US ECONOMIC NEWS

- U.S. home values steadily rising ([Inside Real Estate](#))
- New home sales surge in July ([Inside Real Estate](#))
- US economy grew at 1.1 percent pace in spring ([AP](#))

ENTREPRENEUR NEWS

- A southern town places winning bet on a tech hub ([The New York Times](#))
- What 'geo-fencing' is -- and how it can help your business ([Jerry Osteryoung](#))
- Work the Plan ([Florida Small Business](#))
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