

WEEKEND WAVE

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Friday Economic Roundup

Port Manatee among top 20 U.S. niche ports

By Sarasota Herald-Tribune

PORT MANATEE - Southwest Florida's deepwater seaport was named by "Global Trade" magazine as one of "Top 20 Niche Ports in the United States."

The local port was one of only two in Florida on the list, the other being the much-larger Port of Jacksonville.

The magazine pointed to Port Manatee's ability to handle a wide range of cargo. "At one time, many ports competed for the lucrative and growing container business - but not every port was suited to handle containers," according to the magazine. "As ships got larger and started calling on fewer ports, the ports with the deepest drafts and the most spare acreage won out.

So other ports focused on other, niche markets. "Those not making money handling containers found success with other cargoes, such as bulk and break-bulk commodities, automobiles, roll-on/roll-off (RO/RO) equipment and project cargoes."

The Global Trade article cited Port Manatee's ability to accommodate roll-on/roll-off vessels carrying such cargo as automobiles, buses and trucks, as well as the expansion of the port's Berth 12 and 14 waterfront infrastructure to encompass 1,600 feet of contiguous berthing area.

"Port Manatee is honored to be named as one of the nation's leading niche seaports," Carlos Buqueras, Port Manatee's executive director, said in a written statement. "This recognition underscores the success of Port Manatee's dynamic diversification strategy and well planned capital investments."

The Global Trade list does not assign individual ranks to the ports. Also on the list were the Port of Houston, as the No. 1 U.S. foreign-tonnage port, and the Port of South Louisiana, the largest total tonnage port in the Western Hemisphere.

"Port Manatee is certainly in good company on this prestigious list," Buqueras said. Port Manatee is the closest U.S. deepwater seaport to the expanding Panama Canal. It has 10 40-foot-draft berths.

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 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.

FLORIDA ECONOMIC NEWS

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- Manatee impact fees could rise significantly ([Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#))
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- Puerto Ricans rapidly expanding Central Florida Economy ([Moody's](#))
- Plum Creek merger with Weyerhaeuser to create nation's largest timber company ([Gainesville Sun](#))

US ECONOMIC NEWS

- Despite China Slowdown, Global Economy Expected To Gain Momentum In 2016 And 2017 ([Reuters](#))
- U.S. employers added 271,000 jobs in October ([AP](#))
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