

# WEEKEND WAVE



## Friday Economic Roundup

### **AREA NEWS**

#### **Hive is North Port's answer to The HuB**

By Christi Womack Herald-Tribune

**NORTH PORT** - Sarasota has The HuB.

Now, North Port has the Hive.

The HuB business incubator started in 2009 with a handful of people in a small warehouse and now has about 150 entrepreneurs working in a downtown Sarasota building.

North Port, the fastest growing city in the area, is looking to foster similar success at its "cowork space" on Tamiami Trail in South County.

The Cowork Hive was founded by four men, all married fathers in their late 20s and early 30s with children younger than kindergarten age, who were working at home.

Founder Dave McCarron said future members will be the real drivers of the "Work. Create. Teach. Bee Productive" culture they are championing through design and technology.

"We want to mobilize people to work together professionally and with what we do for the community,"

McCarron said.

Lofty goals, but community is important to techies McCarron, Eddie Lobanovskiy, David Kovalev and Anton Korzhuk.

In North Port Commons, with an insurance agency, hearing aid store and physical therapist as neighbors, the Hive is already taking shape. It features freshly painted gray walls, newly installed wood floor, Wi-Fi access, flat-screen TV, and a white board for jotting down ideas. Lobanovskiy's drone is at the ready for impromptu flights. As a nod to the traditional, there is one land line, a coffee maker and a water cooler.

The Hive is a 24/7 workplace; some of them work days, others throughout the night to accommodate both their family needs and clients' time zones on the other side of the world.

They could choose to live anywhere and make a living, but North Port is home for the lifestyle, not the jobs.

"I enjoy the peacefulness of it," said Kovalev, 28, a native of Russia, who moved to North Port via Atlanta about 15 years ago, met his wife and made memories.

His KovaStudio business does web and print design and app interfaces.

Kovalev's younger brother, Phillip, 22, is the Hive's "busy bee," categorized as more than an intern, who works for Korzhuk, 29, and 1000Watt, a company that does marketing and design for real estate companies.

Between the five of them, they have skills to do just about anything, said McCarron, 34, who telecommutes working for the Capital Care Associates family business in New Hampshire that deals with financing senior housing and care.

"When we have an idea and we look around the room, it's exciting that we can make that a reality," McCarron said.

Lobanovskiy, 32, for example, is sort of a rock star in graphic design circles with his Unfold company; he is No. 2 on Dribbble, a "show and tell" page for designers, with nearly 36,000 followers worldwide. His "Hire Me" button on the website is currently on, just to see what web design and illustration projects look interesting. The native of Belarus does not need additional work.

For now, the founders are settling in and recruiting like-minded new members, such as Anthony DeNardis, CEO of the pickU Media consulting company.

"Having a static place to work is going by the wayside," DeNardis said.

Like Lobanovskiy, DeNardis is not motivated by money, already busy and frequently on the road managing online footprints for clients, including recording artists. He said it is time for him to teach, help and consult, making North Port more progressive to attract others.

He will become a full Hive member Sept. 1.

"If you give value, it will come back to you tenfold," said DeNardis, 39, a married father of two children, ages 17 and 11.

He shared some of his techniques to people attending two "Social Media Marketing Group Hangouts" after-hours sessions at the Hive. Those workshops will always be free to attend.

Cowork spaces, numbering around 2,800 nationwide, are the next phase in how people collaborate together, HuB founder Rich Swier said.

"Creative spaces are awesome to be around," he said.

They are economic drivers, especially in up-and-coming cities that want to achieve more in and for the community.

That description fits North Port, which is only 25 percent built out. Already, it is Sarasota County's largest city in both population with 59,000 people and land mass at 104 acres. The average age is 40.

The tech-related learning opportunities are important to Hive members, who want to cut down on the need to drive to Sarasota, Tampa or Orlando. A Twitter Bootstrap event is being organized in North Port with 352 Inc., a Tampa agency, for September or October.

Members collaborated for a community service project to create a website - at no charge - for the nonprofit North Port Economic Development Corp. to advertise its recent job fair.

"They're headed in the right direction," EDC Executive Director Jean Harris said.

The Hive completed her job fair landing page in less than 48 hours, Harris said, and the result was extremely effective for both job-seekers and employers.

Over time, the Hive partners agreed, their identity will become more clear and they will begin to create more connections with the community.

"It happened so quickly that we haven't entirely formalized plans," McCarron said.

They are still in Phase 1. The current 1,300-square-foot space has room for 16 members.

Once they prove the model works, the second phase entails leasing a larger space with more amenities. They will crowdsource funds to make it happen.

The HuB, in Sarasota, is well-capitalized with the support of entrepreneur Jesse Biter. The focus there is to provide a creative environment so people can interact, spurring innovation to take root.

"We are internally motivated to impress the world around us," Swier said.

At the Hive, members want to create the opportunity for others to be able to start new tech companies.

Members sign an agreement and can lease a space for \$299 a month; the cost decreases to \$199 a month for those committing to a 12-month agreement.

People who want to try out the Hive can buy a pass for \$100 that is good for five visits from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Hive also offers to rent out its space for events for \$49 an hour.

DeNardis said he is looking forward to making the Hive a base.

"All of these different brains, we can collaborate," he said. To get advice, "I can literally turn around my chair."

## Port Charlotte strip mall with five shops sells for \$457,000

By Michael Braga , Herald-Tribune

Herman A. Wessel sold an 8,260-square-foot strip mall at 3846 Tamiami Trail in Port Charlotte to a North Port company managed by Ronald E. Hodgson for \$475,000.

Wessel paid \$144,000 for the 44-year-old retail center in March 1981.

Hodgson's company financed the purchase with a \$380,000 loan from Bank of America.

## Airport receives millions for expansion

By BRENDA BARBOSA STAFF WRITER, CHARLOTTE SUN

PUNTA GORDA - The Federal Aviation Administration has awarded the Punta Gorda Airport \$5.7 million for the expansion of the Bailey Terminal.

At a special meeting of the Charlotte County Airport Authority Thursday, assistant airport manager Jim Parish told commissioners he received an email Thursday morning from the FAA notifying airport officials of the administration's decision to grant the airport's full grant request, which totals roughly \$6.1 million.

"We applied for two grants this year (for two separate projects), but they will be funded under one grant," Parish said.

One grant - totaling \$5,721,319 - will be applied toward the airport expansion, Parish said. Another grant in the amount of \$474,728 will be used to purchase a new aircraft-rescue firetruck, he said.

The grants cover 70 percent of the total cost of each project, Parish said.

"So we're getting everything we asked for," he said.

Airport Authority commissioners voted unanimously to accept the grant, and authorized staff to sign and execute the final documents.

Under the proposed expansion, the Bailey Terminal would more than triple in size, from 16,000 to about 50,000 square feet. The project calls for increasing the number of air gates from two to four, enhancing security areas, and making room for more ticket counters and a larger passenger waiting area.

The expansion will cost about \$8 million, more than half of which will be paid for by the FAA, airport Executive Director Gary Quill said. The Florida Department of Transportation and the Airport Authority will split the remaining 30 percent.

At Tuesday's special meeting, Airport Authority commissioners also approved about \$192,000 worth of contracts with Halfacre Construction.

The first contract totaled roughly \$155,900 for security upgrades at the airport; it called for adding a server, extra cameras and new technology at the gates.

The second contract covers the design portion of an expanded "quickturn facility" in the car rental area, which includes adding cleaning stations and parking. That contract equaled \$21,700.

The final contract commissioners approved totaled \$14,785 for the design of a training area for the Transportation Security Administration.

According to Parish, the TSA, which currently has 42 full-time staff members based at the airport, will lease back the space from the airport.

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- Small businesses prime for expansion, survey finds ([South Florida Sun-Sentinel](#))
- Florida banks' loan growth doubles national pace ([South Florida Business Journal](#))
- Amazon's first fulfillment center in Florida opens in Lakeland ([Tampa Bay Times](#))



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  - Pending home sales up 3.3% in July ([AP](#))
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