



**CHARLOTTE COUNTY**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*Your Business. Cleared for Takeoff.*

# **2016/17** **Annual Report**



# Messages

“After several years of intensive and meticulous groundwork, 2017 was a ‘wheels-up’ year for the Charlotte County EDO, with projects taking flight across the board, from infrastructure to workforce to recruitment.”

- LUCIENNE PEARS, DIRECTOR



Bill Truex  
Chairman

The challenge of responsible, responsive development has never been more critical than today, as our community strives to achieve important and interdependent local goals in a connected global world requiring constant innovation and improvements.

Together, we can move Charlotte County responsibly toward a prosperous future, with greater wealth and a higher quality of life for all through the realization of strategic vision and initiatives that are well thought out, data driven and capably implemented. Our focus must be broad, encompassing all aspects of life and work, necessitating enhancements across the community, from education to infrastructure to quality of life. Judicious, responsive economic development can and should be woven seamlessly into civic thinking and actions to create genuine, sustainable growth.

This year, the EDO reached multiple milestones in our journey toward a stronger future: It has been a good year for Charlotte County, one that we can celebrate, and that should serve as a guide as we look ahead.



Lucienne Pears  
Director

“The greatest force for change is a well paying job.” – Ron Kitchens, *SW Michigan First*

As the Charlotte County Economic Development Office has matured and our impact begins to be seen throughout the community, I believe in Ron’s observation now more than more than ever. And I am happy to report Charlotte County finished the year FY2016-2017 with a 4.4% unemployment rate, more than one full percentage point lower than the same period last fiscal year.

Keeping Charlotte County well positioned for the future, the EDO will continue to aggressively execute our business recruitment, expansion, and retention strategy, while fostering a favourable workforce development environment and the best quality of life enhancements possible.

Innovation in real estate development, laser focused economic development efforts, and strengthened ties with residents will help ensure our community remains stable, vibrant and affordable. Thank you for your support and partnership. Together, we can make an even greater difference.

**We are Cleared for Takeoff!**



Stephanie Kissinger  
CCEDP President

Formerly known as the ECEC, the Charlotte County Economic Development Partnership, or EDP, bears a new name reflecting our strengthened purpose and enhanced capabilities as a private business organization providing powerful and comprehensive support for the EDO.

Our cross-sector membership of business stakeholders has a vested interest in Charlotte County’s long-term prosperity, and our position as a private entity makes us uniquely equipped to support the EDO’s diversified recruitment efforts and other initiatives, and to serve as an effective funding vehicle for business investment. This year, the EDP was pleased to play a critical role in development milestones such as Project Hills in Murdock Village and The Springs at Charlotte Harbor, projects that will enhance the community’s livability for residents and viability as a home for thriving business.

# Annual Review

## A year of transformation and transition.

In 2017, EDO's transformation and transition to a focused, data-driven and results-oriented development model was realized with tangible outcomes. Plans came to fruition; ideas took flight with actions that included an exciting breakthrough in workforce development, high-profile progress by and within our CRAs, a new strategic branding and marketing plan, and notable advancements in asset development.

**WMU: A new and dynamic resource.** On the heels of a historically deep recession, it may have seemed a bold move to implement a \$9 million renovation and upgrade of the Punta Gorda Airport. However, polishing this crown jewel has yielded immediate and far-reaching benefits. In addition to expanding the airport's commercial service and customer base, the upgrade helped to assure Charlotte County's future, by aiding in the establishment of Western Michigan University's Florida aviation footprint in collaboration with Florida Southwestern State College.

While WMU has been top rated by U.S. News and World Report for 25 consecutive years, its College of Aviation is particularly stellar—ranked third among American aviation programs in size, even as it leads the nation in the quality and sophistication of its aviation training through the most technologically advanced training aircraft and simulations. At the Punta Gorda Airport

campus, the university will provide a variety of undergraduate degree programs, from flight management to airport operations and management; partnership with FSW will also allow additional programming in A&P aviation mechanics, health and human services programming and integrated supply chain management.

Thus, the upgrade in airport facilities has resulted in an exponential upgrade in workforce skill and quality, a key asset that industry and site selectors seek when evaluating new locations. WMU's program is also a crucial asset for the future of Charlotte County residents. The FAA predicts that air travel will double by 2032, which along with predicted levels of retirement, will necessitate over a million new jobs requiring highly skilled workers. The global future of our residents has been strengthened.

**CRAs: Meaningful progress.** Meanwhile, Charlotte County's local future is also significantly brighter, thanks to advancements made by CRAs, including the launch of new projects and the attainment of longer range goals: Murdock Village is at last taking shape as a premier location for life, work and play, while a visibly beautified and revitalized Parkside is becoming a reality, and Charlotte Harbor rolls out new pathways for walking—and for vital opportunity.

## Murdock Village

The game-changing potential of Murdock Village is finally being realized, with the contract to purchase by Private Equity Group, LLC of 450 acres for a mixed use development to include up to 2,400 homes, a 150-key hotel, and 200,000-sq.-ft. of retail space that could generate as much as \$40 million per year in taxable revenue while creating more than 300 permanent jobs along with construction employment. This has proven catalytic in drawing another development proposal for a sports and entertainment based project by Lost Lagoon LLLP, enhancing the quality of life with the potential for a destination waterpark, conference center and other hotels, retail and restaurant destinations among other entertainment options.

## Charlotte Harbor

Another important physical step on the Harbor Walk development—Phases 1A and 1B that include a raised boardwalk connecting Live Oak Point Park, a fishing pier and water taxi dock—was matched by an equally significant step in zoning: an innovation to encourage the establishment of microbreweries and distillery operations to create an inviting neighborhood focus. Also freshly minted on the runway, Sunseeker Resorts, a wholly owned subsidiary of Allegiant Travel Co., has announced plans for a 20-acre, one-of-a-kind hotel/condo resort development that will include a resort hotel, up to 9 condominium towers, as well as retail, bar and restaurant options—bringing a potential economic impact of \$20 billion over a ten-year time span.

## Parkside

Groundbreaking on the \$1 million upgrade to McGuire Park won't be the only way the EDO dug deep this year to help generate a higher quality of life and a welcoming sense of place for the community at Parkside. By leveraging and supporting existing healthcare resources while collaborating with other agencies in infrastructure and social services improvements, the EDO helped this deserving community put down stronger roots to flourish.





## Overview

**Global marketing:** With global opportunity comes global competition—both intense and brutal in a world crowded with competing marketers and messages. This year, with strategic planning and branding the EDO was able to propel Charlotte County to the “next level” of industrial awareness and interest, with focused messaging launched across diverse platforms.

Working in collaboration with Marketing Alliance, the EDO implemented a new branding identity: Your business. Cleared for takeoff. The result of careful investigation and evaluation, the tagline served as a creative catalyst for meticulously honed messages communicating Charlotte County’s four key competitive advantages: fast track approvals, top-flight logistics, lower land costs and a higher quality of life and work. The comprehensive effort promoted Charlotte County through traditional avenues as well leading digital platforms, insuring national and global market penetration.

**Asset development:** This year, infrastructure improvements helped make Charlotte County a community that is more attractive and inviting not only for business and industry, but also for residents of all ages, from young professionals to growing families to retirees. And through workforce enhancement and recruitment, the EDO is leading the way to an all-season economy that supports success and satisfaction for residents through all seasons of life.

**A major development, a premier developer:** The joint effort with Private Equity Group LLC, a specialist in large-scale development, is now moving Murdock Village potential from drawing board to reality with PEG’s purchase of 450 acres for mixed-use development that includes housing, retail and a hotel. With EDO cooperation, PEG has been able to sculpt the development around North Regional Park creating an attractive environment criss-crossed with walking paths and ready to support single family homes, multi-family villas, and multi-family townhomes, as well as neighborhood retail in the best tradition of New Urbanism. Situated adjacent to the Charlotte County Sports Park, a 150-key hotel will enhance the County’s visitor appeal. Already underway: Construction on The Springs at Charlotte Harbor, a market-rate apartment development, an urgent need for Charlotte County.

**Powering a workforce, empowering employers:** While the establishment of WMU’s College of Aviation in Punta Gorda obviously represented a critical development in workforce enhancement, the EDO implemented a variety of workforce initiatives in close collaboration with employers and with local training institutions including not only WMU and FSW but also training institutions such as Florida Gulf Coast University, State College of Florida, Ringling College of Art & Design, Argosy University, and New College.



LUCIENNE PEARS

Shown here with Dana Carr of AirTrek, Director Lucienne Pears stays in touch with the community and stakeholder needs, and on top of market demands--which is one of the reasons she landed on another “top.” She was named one of the nation’s Top 50 Economic Developers in 2017 by ConsultConnect.



DAVE GAMMON

Since joining the team in August 2016, Dave Gammon has helped Charlotte County fly high in recruitment and lead generation with a powerful approach grounded in strong analytics. Oftentimes the primary point of contact with prospective businesses, Dave also leverages superb negotiation skills along with extensive commercial real estate experience to help “close the deal.”



KAY TRACY

A 13-year EDO veteran, Kay had to hit the ground running when she joined the team in the aftermath of Hurricane Charley and hasn’t stopped running since. Kay’s connections to the community are deep, and her innate ability to connect and relate resources has made her a critical team member working with our small business community and in our CRAs.

# Competing Nationally and Internationally.

## Awards

---

### SEDC

#### Introduction to Business Opportunities in Charlotte County

Award of Merit - Medium Division

### Expansion Solutions

#### Aviation/Aerospace

“Top-Five” Award of Excellence

### FACERS

#### Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency

Local Agency/State Agency Collaboration Project of the Year

## Partners

---

EDO maintains active partnerships and close relationships with many partners critical to the mission of economic development, here are some of the most critical:

- Enterprise Florida
- Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
- Florida Department of Transportation
- Florida Power and Light
- CareerSource SW Florida
- SW Florida Economic Development Alliance
- Punta Gorda Airport Authority
- Economic Development Partnership
- Charlotte County Industrial Development Authority
- Western Michigan University
- Florida SouthWestern State College
- Florida Gulf Coast University
- Small Business Development Center
- State and Federal Legislative Delegation



In today’s global wired economy, disruption is the rule rather than the exception across many sectors, including Economic Development.

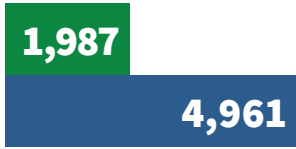
And while a global economy has produced white-hot competition for development, the opportunities presented by digital disruption are substantial for communities with a compelling and comprehensive strategy. With increasing access to massive amounts of data, economic developers can level the playing field in a variety of ways against bigger and better funded competition.

Today, Economic Development is won and lost in communities often without any personal contact and even without the community’s knowledge that a prospect is looking. This is why asset development is so key: **workforce, cost of doing business, business climate, access to capital, quality infrastructure, attainable quality modern housing options and quality education** are all not only decision drivers but also screening criteria. And often times these assets are all equally important. Thus, the first step is to get on the prospect’s radar, as we are doing through establishing and driving our business brand via digital and traditional platforms. The next step is making sure that we are continually striving to create a community that stays ahead in answering global business and resource needs with the enhanced assets mentioned above.

**In the new global era, Charlotte County is positioned to thrive.**

# Marketing

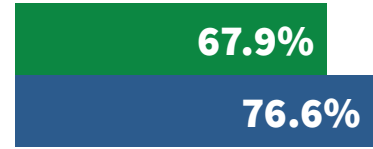
Unique Website Visitors



Website Page Views



Percent New Visitors



● July - Sept. 2016    ● July - Sept. 2017

## The power of diverse platforms.

### Milestone One

A heightened profile for Charlotte County across the nation and around the globe through new branding, targeted marketing and strategically aimed outreach initiatives. Industry and site selectors are learning more about Charlotte County every day through traditional advertising venues as well as through powerful social media platforms, and they like what they are learning.

### Milestone Two

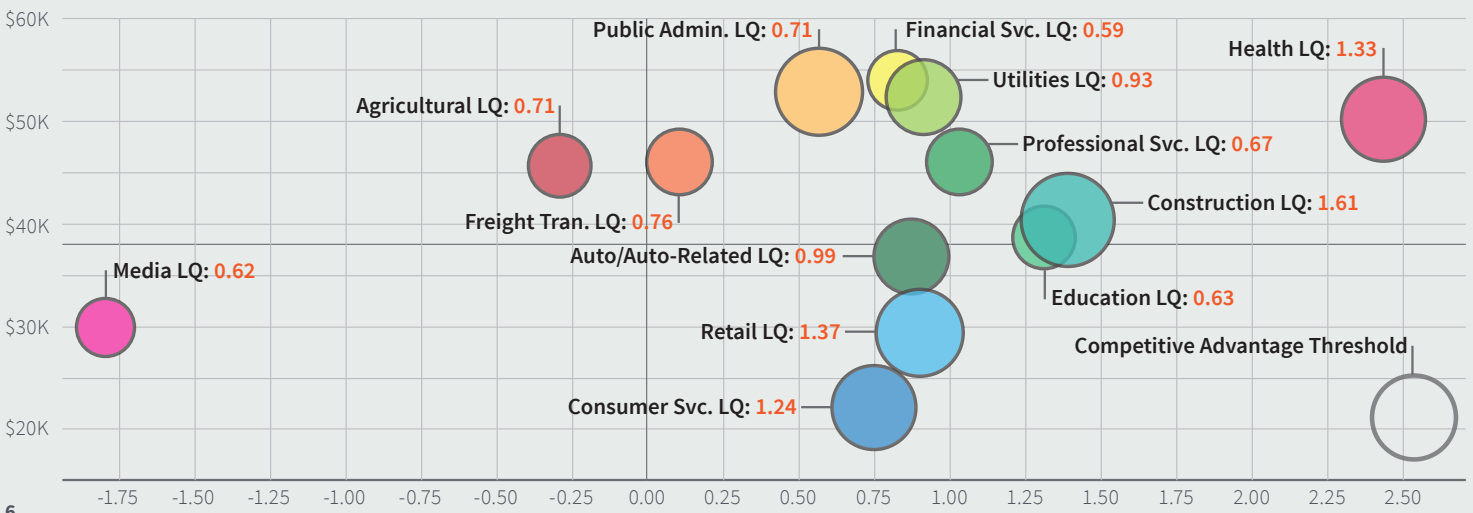
Greater community awareness and support of the EDO mission, goals and achievements. Educational efforts have yielded a more development-literate population here in Charlotte County. Stakeholders are learning more about how sustainable development can be implemented and how it will benefit them—and they like what they are learning.

### Milestone Three

Insights gained through robust outreach help the EDO and its partners respond quickly and sensitively to market and community needs. A virtuous cycle is being established, as improvements prompt further improvements. The EDO learns more every day about how to become more effective in every way for Charlotte County—learning that is leading to results that everyone likes to see, and enjoy.

## Industry clusters.

A cluster is a geographic concentration of interrelated industries or occupations. The industry cluster in Charlotte County, Florida as of 2017Q1 with the highest relative concentration is Construction with a location quotient of 1.61. this cluster employs 4,655 workers in the region with an average wage of \$40,338. Employment in the Construction cluster is projected to expand in the region about 1.4% per year over the next ten years.



# Charlotte County, By the Numbers

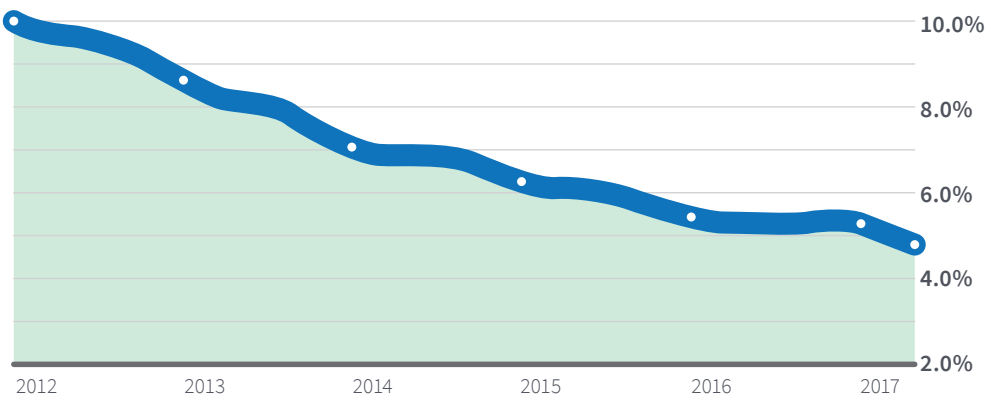
## Workforce & Average Wage for Charlotte County versus 45 minute commute from the Punta Gorda Airport.<sup>1</sup>



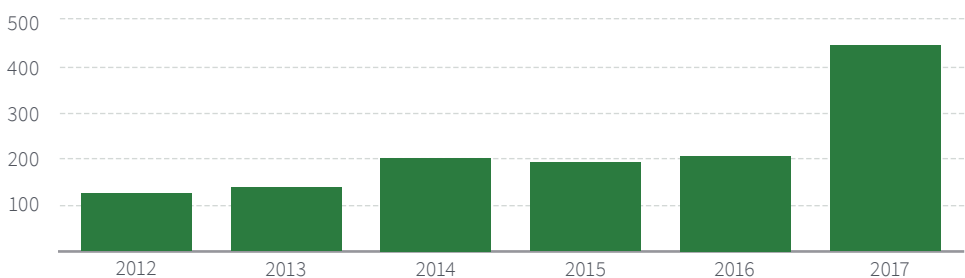
## Total population for Charlotte County versus 45 minute commute from the Punta Gorda Airport.<sup>1</sup>



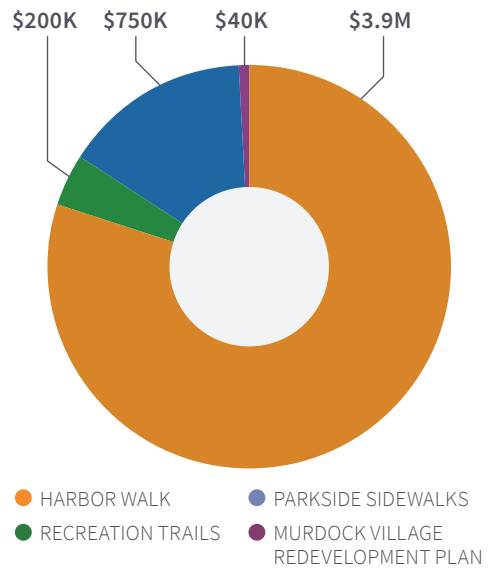
## Charlotte County Unemployment Rate.<sup>1</sup>



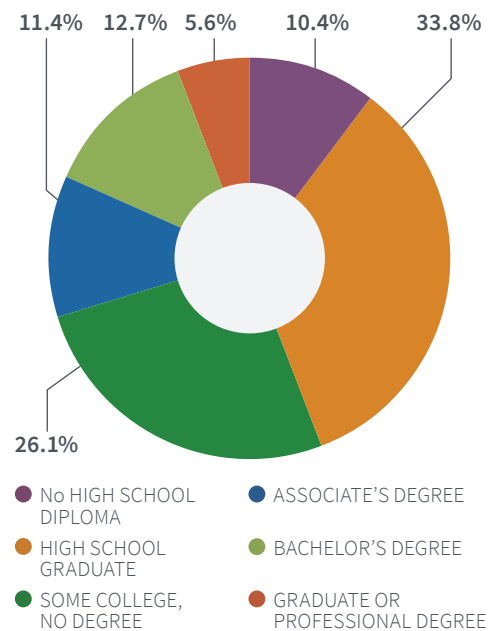
## Charlotte County Commercial Permits.<sup>2</sup>



## Charlotte County EDO Grants Received (\$1M budget resulted in \$4M projects won)



## Charlotte County Educational Attainment<sup>1</sup>



Source: <sup>1</sup>JobsEQ®, Data as of 2017Q1; <sup>2</sup>Charlotte County Government Building Construction Services monthly report, excludes the City of Punta Gorda, includes all permitted building activity within unincorporated Charlotte County

# Why Florida

## PERSONAL INCOME TAX



## INFRASTRUCTURE<sup>1</sup>



## FUTURE JOBS GROWTH<sup>2</sup>



## BEST TAX CLIMATE



## INDUSTRY ATTRACTIVENESS<sup>3</sup>

Aerospace Manufacturing Attractiveness

#1

## MEDICAL DEVICE MANUFACTURING<sup>4</sup>

Largest Number of Medical Device Manufacturing Establishments Among States

#2

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (June 2014); <sup>2</sup>Forbes Magazine (March 2016); <sup>3</sup>PwC; <sup>4</sup>Bureau of Labor Statistics



**CHARLOTTE COUNTY**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*Your Business. Cleared for Takeoff.*

18501 Murdock Circle, Suite 302  
Port Charlotte, FL 33948

[www.Cleared4Takeoff.com](http://www.Cleared4Takeoff.com)

## STAY CONNECTED

Office: 941.764.4941, Fax: 941.764.4947

Email: [info@Cleared4Takeoff.com](mailto:info@Cleared4Takeoff.com)

@CharlotteEDO

Charlotte County Economic Development Office

@Charlotte.edo.98