



**CHARLOTTE COUNTY**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*Your Business. Cleared for Takeoff.*

# **2017/18** **Annual Report**

# Messages

“I believe future generations in Charlotte County will look back at 2018 as a transformational year for economic development. This year marks some of the largest, most impactful projects and partnerships in the County’s history, and I see more success ahead of us.”

- LUCIENNE PEARS, DIRECTOR



Ken Doherty  
Chairman

Strong economic development initiatives positively impact the health and vitality of a community in so many ways – from creating jobs to helping a new generation of workers prepare for them, from building new infrastructure and homes to improving quality of life and recreation. This year, Charlotte County was able to celebrate milestones in all these areas.

- In May, Governor Rick Scott selected Charlotte County as one of six recipients (from 250+ applicants) of an infrastructure grant totalling \$800,000.
- Murdock Village will host ground-breaking this fall for a 2,000+ residential community with 150,000 square feet of neighborhood commercial space and a 125-key hotel.
- Sunseeker Resort on Charlotte Harbor will become the largest hotel-condo resort on the Gulf Coast, with Florida’s longest swimming pool and a mile-long boardwalk.

There are more milestones detailed on these pages. Charlotte County enjoyed success we can celebrate, and I believe it will serve as a guide to an even brighter future.



Lucienne Pears  
Director

Economic Development is a team sport. In Charlotte County, we are fortunate to have extraordinary team members. That starts at the top with our County Commission, led by Chairman Ken Doherty. The commissioners have been powerful advocates for county economic development at the highest levels of state government in Tallahassee where they serve our community.

The commission sets the strategic vision and assures that we have the resources to engage the best people and tools to bring that vision to life. I’m grateful to the Charlotte County Economic Development Partnership, led by President James Coalwell. Its membership of business, community, education and non-profit community leaders is a positive, pro-business, public-private group. They supplement our efforts through personal and business investment dedicated to achieving the mission of economic growth and prosperity for the entire community.

I’m grateful for my extraordinary economic development staff, and equally so, all of the county employees who in so many ways dedicate their time and expertise to supporting our efforts. Lastly, I am grateful for the caring, involved citizens who live and work in this special community. You are the reason we do what we do.



James Coalwell  
CCEDP President

Business and civic leaders in our community have stepped up their game over the past several years, giving the Charlotte County Economic Development Partnership (“CCEDP”) great optimism for the future. We will continue our strategic efforts to be vocal advocates and hands-on facilitators for diversified economic growth in Charlotte County.

Today, Western Michigan’s University’s College of Aviation at the Punta Gorda Airport is training pilots of the future. Add to that, WMU’s extended university degrees and technical education opportunities offered through Florida SouthWestern and Charlotte Technical College and it’s easy to see exponential improvements in workforce quality.

We are proud partners with the County’s Economic Development Office. We will continue to support enhanced job training, diversified recruitment, and innovative funding resources that drive business investment and, most importantly, help ensure long term prosperity for the good people of Charlotte County.

# Annual Review

## Over \$2 billion in capital investments since 2016

Centuries ago, English playwright John Heywood wrote, “Rome wasn’t built in a day, but they were laying bricks by the hour.” In the same way, it has taken several years of dedicated work to build the foundations of economic development success here in Charlotte County. In 2017/18, that groundwork continues to bear fruit. This was a transformational year for the County, as evidenced by the milestones shown below.

### FLORIDA JOB GROWTH FUND GRANT

In May, Governor Rick Scott announced an \$800,000 grant for Charlotte County from the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund. The grant provides funding for the installation of City of Punta Gorda water main infrastructure in conjunction with the County’s \$8 million Piper Road Extension project. According to Robert Hancik, Commissioner of the Charlotte County Airport Authority, “This will create more opportunities for aviation jobs, passenger amenities and for the business community to prosper.” The infrastructure will foster a new main entrance to Punta Gorda Interstate Airport Park, along with 1,400 projected new jobs.

### BABCOCK RANCH

Babcock Ranch is drawing national attention as America’s first community fully powered by solar energy. Today, roughly 350,000 photovoltaic cells stretch across 450 acres (approximately 200 football fields). Florida Power & Light invested more than \$100 million to install the solar panels, wiring and storage batteries required. The 19,000-acre community will eventually be home for 50,000+ residents, several lakes and over 50 miles of biking trails.

### MURDOCK VILLAGE

Lost Lagoon, the investment group behind Volcano Bay in Orlando and Atlantis in the Bahamas, is on track to create a \$132 million sports and entertainment district in Murdock Village with a spectacular 160-acre water park, five hotels, a retail center and outdoor amphitheatre. Concurrently, Private Equity Group, a major land developer, is in the final phases of permitting to construct up to 2,200 residential units on 450 acres with single homes, villas, townhomes and apartments.

### FEWER REGULATIONS, MORE SUCCESS

Successful economic development requires vision, partnership and planning. It also takes a commitment to continuous improvement. With the goal of attracting new companies to Punta Gorda Interstate Airport Park, the largest industrial zone in Charlotte County, the Economic Development Office hired an outside consultant for recommendations. The result? Zoning codes were found to be over-regulated and counter productive to the intense recruitment efforts for new business location and expansion.

Outdated codes were scrapped and re-written to eliminate cumbersome regulations and stimulate overall development. Amigo Pallets, a key supplier for Cheney Brothers, saved 20% on building costs with these reduced regulations – and the airport got a new corporate tenant. That’s a textbook example of Charlotte County’s branding promise: **“Your Business. Cleared for Takeoff.”**

## Sunseeker Resort

Sunseeker Resort is coming to Charlotte County as the largest hotel-condo resort on the Gulf Coast. This project represents a significant investment from Allegiant Travel Company and will feature signature harbor front units in a one-of-a-kind resort setting, including Florida’s longest swimming pool (a whopping 1,000 feet) 15 unique bars, restaurants and cafés, and a mile-long boardwalk for the public to enjoy.

## MetalCraft Marine

MetalCraft Marine, a Canadian company that manufactures commercial workboats, is opening a new facility within the Punta Gorda Interstate Airport Park. The company is a leader in the design and production of high speed patrol boats, fire boats, rescue boats and work boats. Clients include the U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard and ports and communities throughout North America not to mention the County’s newest Fire/EMS rescue boat.

## Amigo Pallets

Amigo Pallets will open a new facility in Charlotte County to support Cheney Brothers, one of the largest food distributors in Florida. The Miami-area firm will supply Cheney Brothers 350,000 sq. ft. operation in Charlotte County with what the company describes as “the most comprehensive pallet management programs and services in the industry.”



## Charlotte County's EDO Team



**LUCIENNE PEARS**  
Director

Now in her eighth year at the Economic Development Office, Lucienne Pears believes these are exciting times. "I've worked in this business long enough to know when a community is poised to take off," she says. "Charlotte County is right there. This is a coastal community with outstanding leadership, plenty of land for development, low tax rates, low crime and a quality of life so good, people pay to vacation here. We have excellent leadership, partnerships and the passion to succeed. I am over-the-top enthusiastic about the future."

"I've worked in this business long enough to know when a community is poised to take off, Charlotte County is right there."

- **LUCIENNE PEARS, DIRECTOR**



**DAVE GAMMON**  
Business Recruitment Supervisor

Dave Gammon came to the Gulf Coast seven years ago with a national real estate background. He now scours the nation for companies interested in making Charlotte County their new home. Dave is motivated by orchestrating deals; his ultimate reward is the successful relocation or expansion of a business that creates new jobs for the local economy. A Colorado native, Dave especially likes the classic "Midwestern friendliness" so common to Florida's Gulf Coast.



**KAY TRACY**  
Redevelopment Coordinator

Kay Tracy earned a degree in communications and has a strong sales and customer service background, which makes her a natural fit for Business Retention and Expansion. "To build a thriving community, you need thoughtful growth, entrepreneurial development, and business recruitment," Kay says. "It starts with clear communication and then action. That's how we fly in Charlotte County. This is a wonderful place to do business and live."



**JOSHUA HUDSON**  
Redevelopment Manager

Josh Hudson coordinates programs designed to implement community redevelopment plans within County CRAs. It's his job to help steer them smoothly from inception to completion. His work spans construction projects and contracts, research, data analysis, and working with other County departments. Hudson really appreciates the endless summer lifestyle of Charlotte County. "As my son grows up," he says, "I plan to spend a lot of time outdoors with him."



**KENNA HUBAI**  
Executive Assistant to the Director

Kenna Hubai functions like an air traffic controller for Lucienne Pears and the always-active Economic Development Office. She provides support ranging from executive administrative tasks to office management, with oversight of the Economic Development Partnership. "There's never a dull moment!" she says. Kenna describes EDO office culture as unparalleled. "It's an atmosphere that fosters personal and professional growth. It's challenging work but we're able to laugh a lot."

## Awards

It's been an award-winning year for Charlotte County's Economic Development Office. The EDO team won two 2018 Promotional, Marketing and Innovation Awards from the **FEDC** (Florida Economic Development Council). Marketing and creative efforts earned more awards from the **SEDC** (Southern Economic Development Council) and **IEDC** (International Economic Development Council). EDO director Lucienne Pears was recognized for the second consecutive year as one of the **Top 50 Economic Development Directors in North America** by *Consultant Connect*.



**Josh Hudson accepts awards for Charlotte County EDO at the 2018 SEDC conference in Mobile, Alabama.**

## Opportunity Zones

Charlotte County has three geographic areas certified by the U.S. Treasury as economic **Opportunity Zones**. These zones were created by the Federal Tax Cut and Jobs Act of 2017, and are intended to stimulate private, long-term investment through tax incentives, including the waiver of federal capital gains taxes.

# The Changing World of Economic Development



Historically, economic development was pretty simple - relationships. Key players and stakeholders would get together, hash things out and make decisions.

That evolved into the use of big data, computerized number crunching incorporating real-time information and detailed projections of everything from workforce size to future profitability. Today, the world of economic development continues to evolve. **The name of the game now is synergy.**

To create successful projects and ventures, you have to integrate a myriad of elements. Relationships aren't just personal, they're between workforce and education, recruitment and housing, incentives and regulations, local business support and government partnerships. Every one of these elements has to play its part; each must contribute and continually improve to support the whole. Every one of these elements can impact any one of the others significantly.

Economic development is more complex, competitive and challenging than ever before. That said, a synergistic approach means success can be achieved more quickly, reliably and on a bigger scale than previously imagined. Charlotte County's Economic Development Office strongly believes recent successes in the County are proof that synergy works. Eventually, a new approach will come along and change the game again – and Charlotte County's EDO office will be prepared.

# Delivering Results with Innovative Marketing

Marketing has steadily evolved from traditional media to the age of the Internet.

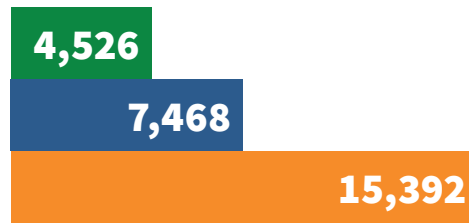
Today, the most successful marketers use CRM (customer relationship management) software and social media tools to engage their audiences with a personal, one-on-one approach. Over the last year, Charlotte County's Economic Development Office invested strategically in digital marketing campaigns. The numbers below show an impressive return on investment.



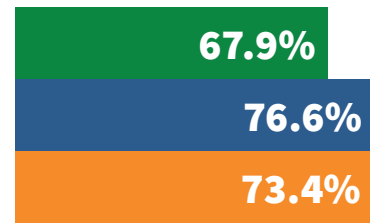
## Unique Website Visitors



## Website Page Views



## Percent New Visitors



● July - Sept. 2016

● July - Sept. 2017

● Jan. - June 2018



**LINKEDIN IMPRESSIONS 115,785**

**LINKEDIN LINK CLICKS 2,417**

**TWITTER IMPRESSIONS 744,433**

**COMPANY LEADS 445**

**TOTAL SPEND \$10,575**



# Charlotte County, By the Numbers

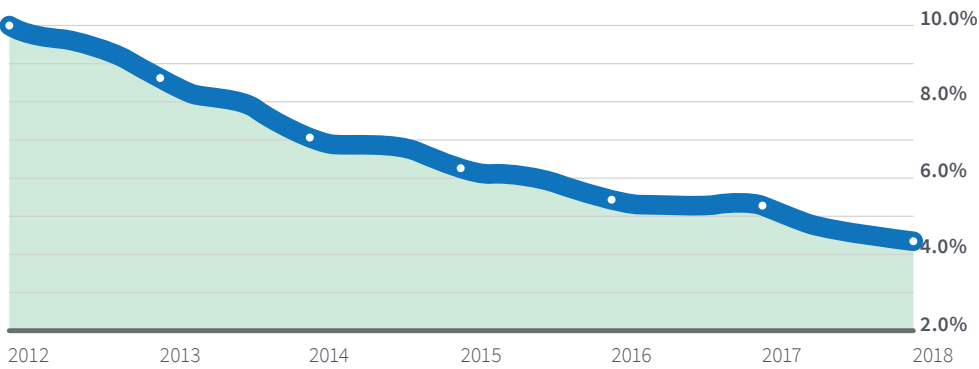
## Workforce & Average Wage for Charlotte County versus 45 minute commute from the Punta Gorda Airport.<sup>1</sup>



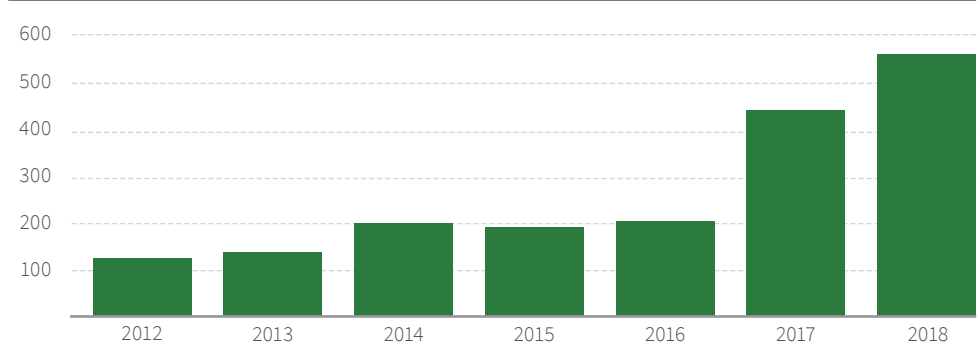
## Total population for Charlotte County versus 45 minute commute from the Punta Gorda Airport.<sup>1</sup>



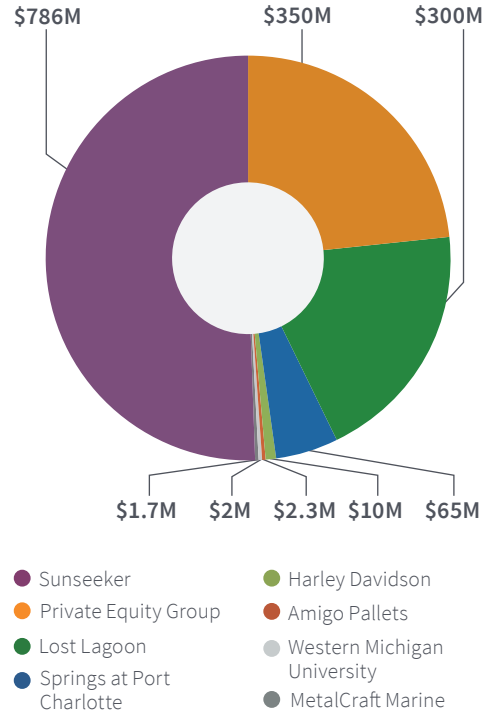
## Unemployment Rate.<sup>1</sup>



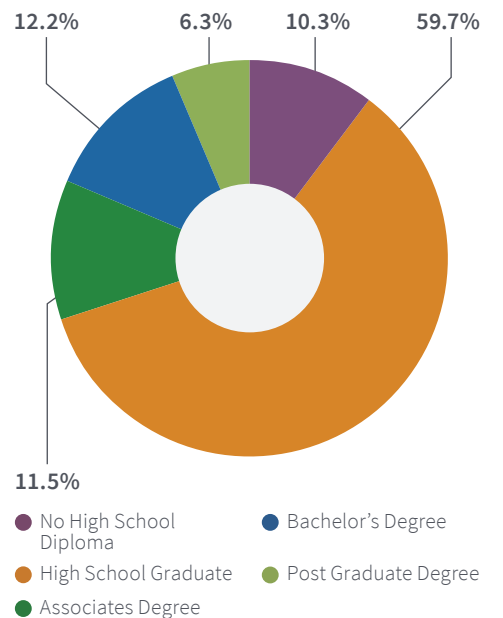
## Commercial Construction Permits.<sup>2</sup>



## EDO Grants Received (\$1M budget resulted in \$1.5B projects won)



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



# 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



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## STAY CONNECTED

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