Moving Towards A New Conference Center

This week, Cape Coral City Council approved a number of zoning-related amendments to keep plans for a new 40,071-square-foot conference center on track to begin construction soon.

Developers of the Westin Resort at Tarpon Point Marina are behind this $12 million project. The new center is projected to create 33 new jobs, bring in $100,000 in bed tax money and provide a total regional benefit of $33.44 million in the first three years.

"The conference center will become an important anchor for economic development in our city," says EDO Manager Dana Brunett. "It will be exciting to see the commercial development that will arise from having a conference center in Cape Coral, and it will be nice to be able to bring in business-related visitors to our community as a result of this conference center."

In addition to the conference center, the hotel plans to remodel a number of two-bedroom suites into one-bedroom rooms to increase the number of rooms available.

Economic Development News

Message From Your EDO Manager

Manufacturing is Important to the Cape Coral Economy

As we work to build our commercial base in Cape Coral, it's important to keep in mind that although manufacturing is a small percentage of our present economy, it's an important one.

When we talk about manufacturing, some people tend to think about large factories with smokestacks. Cape Coral, for the most part, is not suitable for a large-scale factory setting. Because of our pre-platted nature, it's difficult to assemble the property needed for such facilities with the necessary buffering.

Cape Coral is, however, perfectly suited for smaller manufacturing and assembly businesses that tend to be suppliers to the larger companies in this country. That is our "sweet spot." Those are the companies we recruit. Between 10 and 50 employees is the targeted size for our recruiting efforts. Smaller companies tend to be more mobile and willing to relocate to a new location. The related jobs usually offer the potential for better-than-average wages.

Where do we put these companies? We have two industrial parks in Cape Coral and a new one on the way. The North Cape Industrial Park at the terminus of Andalusia Boulevard and Viscaya Industrial Park off Del Prado Boulevard has been around for a long time. The new park is the Kismet Industrial Park located at Kismet Parkway and Littleton Road, which features 25 acres of prime industrially zoned land with direct,
Wicked Dolphin Distillery is expanding. Owner JoAnn Elardo has purchased the land south of the distillery with plans to increase the operation with a new rack house for barrels, an event room and a larger area for distillery tours in late 2017. Wicked Dolphin has experienced good sales growth and recently took the opportunity to expand its current line of rum to include 1 liter and 1.75 liters. This will give consumers a better opportunity to buy their favorite handcrafted rum at a greater savings.

Elardo is committed to staying true to her vision to provide a uniquely Florida craft rum and spirits using quality ingredients and locally grown materials.

Wicked Dolphin Rum is located at 131 SW 3rd Place in Cape Coral. For details on free tours and tastings, visit: Wicked Dolphin Rum Tours.

I am a firm believer in diversifying our economy, and manufacturing offers us a solid option. I sit on the board of the Southwest Florida Manufacturers Association (SRMA). The SRMA is hosting an event on June 23 at Bury Me Brewing in Fort Myers. If you own a manufacturing/assembly business in Cape Coral, please consider joining us next Thursday at 5 p.m. It's a great networking experience and SRMA offers educational resources as well.

Sincerely,

Dana Brunett
City of Cape Coral
Economic Development Manager

Family Health Centers of Southwest Florida Expands Medical Options

To address the growing population of Cape Coral, Family Health Centers of Southwest Florida has expanded its operations in the city to provide affordable health care options for children and adults.

In January, it officially opened its four-story, 48,000-square-foot clinic at 316 Del Prado Blvd. S., offering a pediatric and adult family practice, dental care, a pharmacy and Elite Healthcare for Medicare patients. To date, the company has 21 medical clinics and nine dental offices in Lee, Hendry and Charlotte counties. Family Health Centers receives funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration to help provide discounts to the medically underserved patient population.

The building had pre-existing offices on the second floor where American Board of Family Medicine-certified Dr. Ronald Ramirez began offering services in July 2014. However, work was needed to customize the other floors because most of the structure was essentially an unfinished shell.
Sun Splash
Summer Hours

Sun Splash Family Waterpark is now open seven days a week, with park hours from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The new hours will run through Aug. 9. Sun Splash is located at 400 Santa Barbara Blvd., Cape Coral. For more details:
Sun Splash Waterpark

Learning Opportunities

SCORE Workshop: Social Media 102: You're Social, Now What?
Tuesday, June 21,
6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Keiser University
Workshop Registration

Cape Coral EDO & SBDC
4th Wednesday BizChat: Managing a Business
Wed. June 22,
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Nicholas Annex (Public Works Building)
815 Nicholas Parkway
Cape Coral, FL 33990
Lunch is included with this free program. No registration required.

Cape Chamber Food For Thought Lunch and Learn: How to Grow Your Business Online with Ecommerce
Thurs. July 7,

Robert Palussek, vice president and chief operating officer of Family Health Centers of Southwest Florida, says that according to projections, the clinic will see 4,320 patients in the first year, a number expected to rise to more than 7,100 in the second year. "The company has looked at the growing population in North Fort Myers and Cape Coral. We have seen that it's a growing area along with the medically underserved," he said. "That's part of our mission-to provide high-quality health care services to all people."

In addition to family, pediatric and dental care, the clinic provides OB/GYN and internal medicine services. It works closely with several local specialists for low-cost patient referrals and treatment. For Medicare patients, each appointment will be allotted 30 minutes "to provide services in a rush-free environment," Palussek said.

The clinic is located at 316 Del Prado Blvd. S. Hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information:
Family Health Centers of Southwest Florida

Southwestern Vocational Training Celebrates First Formal Graduation

May marked another milestone for Southwestern Vocational Training (SWVT) when more than 30 program graduates took part in the school's first formal graduation ceremony. The school specializes in short-term, fast-paced medical training for jobs ranging from certified nursing assistant to phlebotomist and medical assistant. "These students have taken their training seriously and deserve to have their achievements recognized," says school President Sylvia Dorisme. "What is especially exciting to me is to know that more than half of these graduates have already secured jobs." SWVT is expecting to hold two graduations per year, with the next one scheduled for December.

Cape Coral Councilmember Rana Erbrick was among the graduation day speakers, along with Ralph Santillo,
New Cape Coral Businesses

131 new businesses registered for Cape Coral Tax Receipts (Business Licenses) in May 2016.

Click here to view new Cape business reports.

Cape Community Foundation Grant Deadline Approaching

The Cape Coral Community Foundation (CCCF) is a nonprofit organization committed to helping worthy organizations to make a difference in our community. This year, the CCCF expects to award more than $100,000 in grants. The deadline to apply for a grant is July 10. For more information and to apply for a grant, please visit: https://www.capecoralfound.org/grants

CCCIA Celebrates 45th Anniversary

The nonprofit organization is the voice of the city's building industry.

By Bill Johnson, Jr., CCCIA Executive Director

The Cape Coral Construction Association Industry (CCCIA) is a nonprofit organization marking its 45th anniversary this year in serving the community and the building industry. Its work benefits those engaged in construction-related industries and assists in maintaining reasonable building costs, while providing homebuyers the safest and highest quality of craftsmanship.

Recently, the CCCIA has focused on single-family homes—the largest area of growth over the last few years, but the largest component in the construction industry in Cape Coral. This year alone, the organization is projecting 1,250-plus single-family home permits to be issued, compared to half that number (570) a few years ago. With this level of steady growth, maintaining superior levels of service is paramount to the association.

Over the last few months, the CCCIA and its members have been involved in a stakeholders group that has met with Cape Coral City Manager John Szerlag, Department of Community Development Director Vince Cautero and Building Official Paul Dickson. The main objective has been to design solutions to help the
Invest in Summer Months Strategically

By Russ Winstead CBA, CFM, CGBP FGCU Small Business Development Center, Cape Coral Consultant

Wow, summer is already here. Now what? Vacation and relaxation...yes, some of that is in order. In Southwest Florida, we know we deserve a break to recharge and enjoy what we have worked so hard to accomplish during the demanding season.

However, as quickly as summer has come, season will be back in what seems like a short time! So, after the time off, beach excursions and BBQ gatherings, it's time to for business planning. The slower season is a great time to review the past year. What went well? What needs to be improved? Even the best businesses take stock of their situation. They look at what they did year over year and how the marketplace or their sector may be changing. Once you have a good idea of what is going on in your business and the market, you can set revenue goals and other objectives.

How did your business grow or contract in relation to the local marketplace? If you are growing, why did you grow? If you're not, why? Do you have plans to expand your products or services? Is there a void you may be overlooking—a commercial sector to fill? Do you want to increase revenues?

This is the kind of valuable analysis you need to perform if you want to go into season with a solid foundation. The slowed summer period is an opportune time to assess your overall operation. Invest this time wisely.

If you are a Cape Coral business owner who would like to schedule a private, free consultation to help you on this or any other matter, please don't hesitate to contact...
The Cape Coral Caring Center's summer food fundraiser is now in full swing, with drop-off collection sites in many locations throughout the city and a special "SOS Summer Smackdown" event planned:

Thursday, June 23
5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Dixie Roadhouse
$5 cover charge goes to the cause

Here's how it works: When paying the cover charge, people get to choose which group they want their money to go to as they compete to raise the most to smack down hunger in the Cape.

Participating groups confirmed:
- Cape Coral Chamber
- Cape Coral Construction Industry Association
- Rotary Clubs of Cape Coral
- Hispanic Chamber of SW Florida
- 24th Avenue God Squad
- Royal Palm Coast Association of Realtors
- Kiwanis Clubs of Cape Coral
- SCHEA

The event will feature line-dance lessons and giveaways, including a Budweiser Bike donated by Dixie Roadhouse. Fox4 will broadcast live.

Non-perishable food items are also encouraged. All donations will be given to the Cape Coral Caring Center's SOS campaign. The group that raises the most money and/or food will be the Smackdown Champion and receive the coveted Smackdown Wrestling Belt.

For a list of drop-off locations, visit the Cape Coral Caring Center Facebook page:
Food Collection Sites