



State's Economic Growth is Robust

Florida's economic growth is running ahead of the United States as a whole, according to the U.S. Commerce Department.

New figures show Florida's real gross domestic product (GDP) rose 3.1 percent in the fourth quarter of 2016 - ranking the Sunshine State fourth in growth among the states and District of Columbia. For all of 2016, Florida's GDP increased 3 percent, ranking fifth.

However, among the five most populated states, Florida's GDP was the fastest-growing in 2016, with California's a close second.

U.S. growth has averaged 2.1 percent a year since the recession ended in mid-2009. The nation's GDP growth rate slowed to just 1.5 percent in 2016.

Read more: [Commerce Department Report](#)

Economic Development News

Message From Your EDO Manager *Another Step Forward*

This week, the Cape Coral City Council approved a new incentive package for NT Manufacturing, better known as Nor-Tech Hi-Performance Boats. This is a performance-based incentive related to new job creation and the construction of a new 45,000-square-foot facility. This is another step in our efforts to increase manufacturing and create higher wage jobs in our city.

As a result of this expansion project, Nor-Tech plans on adding as many as 150 new employees over the next three to five years. Many of these jobs will be skilled positions garnering higher wages. This project will also establish Nor-Tech's world headquarters in Cape Coral at the North Cape Industrial park. Their operations in North Fort Myers will remain an integral part of its operation moving forward.



I am very pleased that Nor-Tech chose Cape Coral for this very exciting project. I am also thankful to receive unanimous support from the city council and city manager's office. As Cape Coral continues to grow, it's important to understand that our city leaders recognize the need to increase employment, investment and wages, and are doing their best to support efforts that bring those results.



No. 1 in the Nation for Retired Vets

According to WalletHub, Florida ranks No. 1 in the nation for retired military veterans. The study's authors conclude that typical military retirees don't fit the traditional style of picking up golf clubs and hitting the beaches—they continue to work. The average veteran is 42 to 45 years old upon retirement from service. "Many of those who reenter the job market face tough challenges during the transition while others struggle with more difficult problems, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, disability and homelessness," the study notes.

WalletHub's analysts sought to help ease the burden on our nation's military community by comparing the 50 states and the District of Columbia based on their conduciveness to a comfortable military retirement. The analysis used a data set of 22 key metrics, ranging from veterans per capita to number of VA health facilities to job opportunities for veterans.

Find out more: [Military Retirees Study](#)

We are a fast-growing city with a pro-growth administration, which will help us as we navigate toward the future. Given that we are less than 50 percent built out, we still have many opportunities ahead and I'm confident that we are prepared to embrace that growth in a meaningful way for our existing and future residents.

Sincerely,

Dana Brunett

**City of Cape Coral
Economic Development Manager**

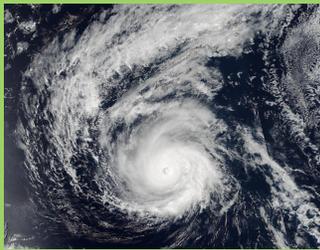
Nor-Tech Hi-Performance Boats Expanding

The Cape Coral City Council has approved up to \$120,000 in incentives for Nor-Tech Hi-Performance Boats to expand their Cape Coral operations.

The company, which specializes in manufacturing custom, high-performance boats, currently has a location in Cape Coral as well as North Fort Myers. With its recent success, the company is planning to expand with the construction of a 45,000-square-foot facility in the North Cape Industrial Park.

The building expansion and relocation of the world headquarters to Cape Coral could see the creation of up to 150 new jobs in the city, over half of which will be positions with annual average salaries of more than \$45,000, according to the company. The city's incentive package would provide the company \$1,500 for each high-wage job created over the next three years in the form of rebates after the job has been in place for one year.

Are You Prepared?



The Atlantic hurricane season is here. Business owners: Are you prepared? The season runs June 1 through Nov. 30. This year's official forecast is projecting that the Atlantic Basin will experience 11-17 named storms, 5-9 of which could be hurricanes. Do you have a plan for your place of business, employees and your family? Do you have all of your important documents and insurance policies in a safe, handy place where you can easily take them with you during an evacuation? As a business owner, be sure you have assessed your specific operation and have a plan in place before a storm hits. A good place to start is the National Hurricane Center, which has a toolbox of educational and planning resources: [National Hurricane Center](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov).

RSW April Passenger Count Sets Record

During April, more than 1.032 million passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW), an increase of 14.7 percent compared with April 2016. This number also represents the best April in the 34-year history of the



Chocolatier Blends Experience with Passion



Matt Henderson, owner of The Adirondack Chocolatier

After gaining a decade and a half of experience in corporate restaurants as an executive chef and general manager, Matt Henderson decided to become his own boss and start a company that he could potentially expand. With his culinary skills, he decided to offer high-quality, gourmet products that reflected a "local vibe factor" and opened The Adirondack Chocolatier at the corner of Nicholas Parkway and Santa Barbara Boulevard in November 2014.

Henderson modeled his company from one operated by an acquaintance in Upstate New York, hence the name. The chocolate purveyor taught him the "Basics 101," such as temperature, texture and cooling, and shared recipes. Henderson did a lot of research and trial-and-error on his own. "It's a lot like baking in terms of chemistry," he says. In three years, the 38-year-old entrepreneur has opened a second location in downtown Fort Myers, offers more than 50 products, and has partnered with other businesses, such as Gulf Coast Fudge Co., Beth's Popcorn Company in Naples, Zeno's Saltwater Taffy in Daytona Beach and a national edible arrangement company.

The Adirondack Chocolatier has five types of fudge and 20 kettle-cooked popcorn in flavors such as dill pickle, jalapeño, barbeque, coconut and orange that Henderson mixes on-site. The bulk of his chocolate barks, homemade peanut butter cups, English toffees and more are produced in Cape Coral,

airport. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 1.1 percent from the same period last year.

New Cape Coral Businesses



130 new businesses registered for Cape Coral Tax Receipts (Business Licenses) in May 2017.

[Click here](#) to view new Cape business reports.

Events



4th Wednesday BizChat
Wednesday, June 28
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Nicholas Annex
815 Nicholas Parkway
Cape Coral, FL 33990

Hosted by the Cape Coral EDO in partnership with FGCU's Small Business Development Center with participation from the Cape Chamber and a host of community partners.

This meeting offers existing and prospective business

where visitors can watch the action unfolding. He also ships nationally, and fills special orders for gift baskets for large employers and weddings, and caters special-event dessert bars. "Our mantra is that we use high-quality gourmet chocolate delivered at a value price. There's a budget and style for everybody," says Henderson.

Henderson has lived in Southwest Florida since 2004. He chose Cape Coral to launch his chocolate shop because he noticed the robust residential and commercial growth during the past several years, and realized "the opportunities seemed to be evident."

The Adirondack Chocolatier is located at 1031 Santa Barbara Blvd., #14, in Cape Coral. Find out more: (239) 219-7329 or [The Adirondack Chocolatier](#).



Henderson sells homemade barks, truffles, fudge, popcorn, saltwater taffy and more.

Association Promotes Partnering South Cape to Boost Business

Business owners in South Cape are working closely together more than ever before, thanks to the South Cape Hospitality & Entertainment Association (SCHEA) and its first executive director, Donna Meola. SCHEA formed four years ago, as a dream of five South Cape business owners with a mission is to enhance year-round shopping, dining, and entertainment opportunities in South Cape by facilitating partnerships between businesses in the area.

Since Meola began in August, the organization has grown to include more than 100 South Cape businesses. Meola helps business owners to connect with each other to create enticing reasons for patrons to come into their establishments. Any South Cape business can participate.

SCHEA puts on events throughout the year to attract crowds of locals and tourists. The monthly trolley events are among the most recognized. "They're getting so popular we've had marriage proposals on our trolley runs, and people are even planning their vacations around events in South Cape," says

owners an opportunity to test their company elevator speech and learn how to fine-tune the message.

Enjoy a free light lunch and hear a short educational message from a small business expert.



Want to be Your Own Boss?

Goodwill SWFL Micro Enterprise Institute Classes Start in Cape Coral on Monday, July 17

Develop a solid business plan to guide your startup with the assistance of an experienced business owner who serves as your coach. Hear from experts in areas of accounting, legal, marketing, insurance and funding.

**Classes:
Monday & Thursday
Evenings
6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Class runs six weeks for \$80**

Location:
Public Works Building -
Community Room
815 Nicholas Parkway E.
Cape Coral, FL 33990
This class can be taken for FREE if you meet low income guidelines.
More information and registration: [MicroEnterprise](http://MicroEnterprise.com) (239) 995-2106, ext. 2219

Food for Thought

Meola.



SCHEA Executive Director Donna Meola (left) with Perk & Brew owner Theresa Knazek at the Cape Coral Parkway coffee shop.

The most recent trolley event, Cruising the South Cape, boasted 10 "ports of call" where guests were able to stop along the way and sample a featured drink and appetizer from each establishment. Some local restaurants and bars that are regularly featured in SCHEA's trolley events include Cape Coral Brewing Co., Dixie Roadhouse, Perk & Brew, and BackStreets Sports Bar, among others.

SCHEA is a nonprofit organization with a commitment to funnel donations back into the South Cape community. This includes planned contributions to the \$8 million Streetscape Project that will redesign the entertainment district from S.E. 47th Terrace, east of Coronado Parkway and west to Del Prado Boulevard by the end of 2018.

SCHEA is effectively helping the business district in South Cape to come alive, drawing in more business and making events in the area memorable and exciting. "South Cape will be known as a destination location," says Meola.

The Smarter You Work...

By Russ Winstead, Cape Coral Business Consultant
Florida Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Florida Gulf Coast University

As I often do, I was recently looking for ways to be more productive. One adage I have heard over the years is, "The harder you work, the luckier you are." There is definitely a connection between work performed and the success that is perceived by others as "luck." However, I think the phrase would be better if it were, "The smarter you work, the luckier you are!"

How do we work smart? There are many ways to go about it. One method I employ is to first think the situation, opportunity

Luncheon Seminar

The Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce's monthly luncheon will focus on "Managing all Social Media Easily, Cheaply and in One Place" on Thursday, July 6, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The cost is \$15 for Chamber members; \$20 for non-members. It will be held at Cape Coral Technical College on Santa Barbara Boulevard. More details and registration: [Food for Thought](#)



Contact Us

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Resources

or problem through. Define your ultimate goal. What exactly do you want to accomplish? Then analyze your options to accomplish this goal. How much will it cost if done one way versus another? How much time or cost is involved in using different approaches? How will the different approaches affect the quality of the outcome?

Once you have done the appropriate analysis, you have the information you need to make a smart decision. Each situation is different. Each challenge requires different questions that need to be answered or approaches used. However, the common theme is to thoroughly analyze any major decision before taking action. Be as proactive as you can be, instead of reactive.

Many times, we may not have all the information we want or the luxury of time to make a decision. However, if as a rule you take the needed time (when you can) to really look at the details and plan your approach, you will be known as that "lucky" (and successful) business owner for whom things seem to always work smoothly.



If you would like consultation or guidance on business issues or growing your business, contact me directly or attend our free Fourth Wednesday BizChats, held at Nicholas Annex, 815 Nicholas Parkway, at 11:30 a.m.

SBDC at Florida Gulf Coast University
1020 Cultural Park Blvd., #3
(239) 573-2737
rwinstead@fgcu.edu

Cape Coral Chamber

**CareerSource Southwest
Florida**

**Cape Community
Foundation**

CCCIA

City of Cape Coral

**Cape Coral Business
Alliance**

**Goodwill MicroEnterprise
Program**

**Lee County EDO
SW Florida Economic
Development Alliance**

SBDC

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**WE'VE CREATED A MONSTER ON OUR SHORES,
BAYS, RIVERS AND LAKES.**

Improper application of fertilizers such as using more than recommended amounts or applying the wrong formulas at certain times of the year, has come back to bite us. When combined with rains and run-off, these nutrients are redirected from our lawns and gardens and feed harmful aquatic algae that threatens our quality of life and our economy. We all need to do our part and ask you to do yours by using the resources provided. Please don't feed the monster! Fertilize Smart!



Spread the News!!

Keep up with important business-related news and events. The Cape Coral EDO and its community partners are here to facilitate commercial growth in Cape Coral. In our monthly e-newsletter, subscribers learn about local workshops and training opportunities, networking events, city initiatives and more. Share this with a friend today!

[Forward to a Friend](#)

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