

Charlotte County update for 8/24/16

## **Cheney Brothers hits job goal three years early**

By Ray Sandrock, Charlotte County Administrator

Cheney Brothers Inc. announced this week it had exceeded its five-year job-creation target of creating 380 jobs three years early. The food distribution center near the Punta Gorda Airport opened in 2015. Our Economic Development Office helped the company apply for and receive incentives from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity and the Florida Department of Transportation in return for reaching capital improvement and job-creation targets. The county received a \$722,000 DOT reimbursement for the construction of its Cheney Way road project.

Cheney Brothers CEO Byron Russell said, "We could not be more pleased by the success of our distribution center in Charlotte County."

Cheney Brothers Director of Development Warren Newell said Charlotte County "has been with us every step of the way."

The company doesn't intend to slow down. In May, plans were announced for a 100,000-square-foot expansion of the distribution center and a new 50,000-sq.-ft. meat-cutting facility on the site.

The project is a great example of a public-private partnership to create jobs and boost economic development in the county. It shows that "open for business" is more than just a slogan in Charlotte County. It works.

### **Together Charlotte**

Another example of public-private partnerships is Together Charlotte, a cooperative effort between the Charlotte County Human Services Department, the Charlotte Community Foundation, the United Way of Charlotte County, Charlotte Behavioral Health Care and the Florida Department of Health. The initiative's goal is to develop a strategy to improve the coordination and delivery of health and human services in Charlotte County.

Together Charlotte has scheduled three community conversations to solicit input from community members and agency representatives. The first meeting is 2 p.m., today at Tringali Park, 3460 N. Access Road in Englewood. Two more are scheduled for 10 a.m., Sept. 7 at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center, 75 Taylor St., in Punta Gorda and 4 p.m., Sept. 8 at the Mid-County Regional Library, 2050 Forrest Nelson Blvd., in Port Charlotte. The public is invited to attend and provide input.

### **Visitor safety**

Visitor safety is important and in order to provide current and accurate information, the Charlotte Harbor Visitor and Convention Bureau has posted critical information to its [OurSafeTravel.com](http://OurSafeTravel.com) website. The site offers information about the Zika virus and water quality and provides helpful resource links to assist visitors traveling to or planning to visit Charlotte County.

## **Boxing tourney**

Economic impact numbers for the Sugar Bert Productions boxing tournament held at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center in June recently arrived. The tournament, which generated 300 room night in local hotels, produced more than \$500,000 in direct expenditures on lodging, food and shopping.

The event attracted 310 boxers and another 140 coaches and officials. Family and friends added to the number of visitors the tournament drew to Charlotte County. The event is the first of three tournaments promoter Bert Wells agreed to stage here. The next tournaments will be in 2018 and 2020.

## **Disaster training**

Charlotte County Community Emergency Response Team is offering a basic training course to citizens to teach essential lifesaving functions while waiting for first responders to arrive following a disaster. The free three-day course covers personal and family preparedness, fire safety, disaster psychology, search and rescue techniques and first aid.

The classes are scheduled for 9 a.m., Sept. 10, 17 and 24 at the Public Safety Building, 26571 Airport Road east of Punta Gorda. The final day to register is Sept. 9. To register, call 813-702-3785 or email [CharlotteCountyCERT@gmail.com](mailto:CharlotteCountyCERT@gmail.com)

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