



## *SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL*

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# Funded Projects

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### **USF CONNECT Physical Expansion to Sarasota County**

The Council worked closely with the University of South Florida to prepare a successful application for assistance from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). The University received \$1 million to support the construction of an 11,670 square foot aquaculture incubator, with tanks for a test bed facility, laborites, a conference room, resident, and office space for the development of aquaculture wastewater treatment technologies in Sarasota County. This facility will be built at the Mote Aquaculture Park in Sarasota County. This facility would allow start-up companies to test/develop sustainable energy technologies within the Aquaculture Park campus.

The expansion of USF CONNECT at Mote Aquaculture Park in Sarasota County will allow for the creation of new high-tech, high-paying jobs. The Tampa Bay Technology Incubator (TBTI), established in 2005, employs 148 with an average wage of \$59,000. Employment at TBTI has increased more than 50% since 2007. The facility would be expected to create 7 spinouts and 50 jobs annually. Construction jobs would be created during the construction phase of the project.

### **Florida Regional Incubator Network Study for Southwest Florida**

The Council was awarded \$30,000 to develop a plan for a regional incubator network from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). The study was sponsored by the Southwest Florida economic development organizations, regional firms, foundations, and private individuals. The study was administered by the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council and completed by the Regional Economic Research Institute at Florida Gulf Coast University.

This study is a key foundation in developing a better economic development plan for the region that includes not only local incubators but a regional incubator network that can share and pool resources in a way that is effective and efficient. The regional incubator network is a regional initiative that came out of the CEDS planning process is incorporated in the region's CEDS plan

### **City of Fort Myers Southwest Florida Enterprise Center**

The Council assisted the City of Fort Myers with its application to the EDA for financial assistance to develop and expand this business incubator. The Southwest Florida Enterprise Center will provide each tenant with expertise in business startup, planning, budgeting, operations, and marketing. Construction

on the new Center is scheduled to begin in 2006, creating 63 jobs. Once finished in 2007, the ongoing operation of the new businesses in the Enterprise Center is expected to directly generate about \$12,181,000 per year and 116 jobs. The indirect and induced impacts of the new facility are expected to add another \$4,400,000 and 56 jobs to the community. A second phase of the project is planned for 2008 and will include an administrative and training center, conference rooms, and more than 7,000 square feet of leasable office space.

#### **Charlotte County UPS Infrastructure Project**

The Council provided technical support for Charlotte County's application to the EDA for funding to construct and install water lines, gravity sewer lines and storm water retention facilities infrastructure improvements to serve United Parcel Service, Inc. and keep 92 citizens employed there. The EDA is providing \$487,000 of the estimated \$608,750 public dollars the project will require (the private sector is investing approximately \$1,000,000 in this project).

#### **Clewiston Water Treatment Plant**

The Council worked closely with Clewiston to prepare a successful application for assistance from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). The City received \$2 million to support the construction of a reverse osmosis treatment plant which will have the capacity to produce 3 million gallons of water per day once it becomes operational. The plant is being built in an economically distressed area where unemployment is high and per capita incomes are low. The plant will not only benefit the community by providing a much-needed new source of potable water, it will also result in the retention of 2,510 jobs which could have been lost if the area continued to have an inadequate water supply.