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**HARVEST HOMETOWN MARKET IN MOORE HAVEN LEAVES TOWN;
GOOD WHEELS TO PROVIDE SERVICE BETWEEN MOORE HAVEN AND CLEWISTON IN 2014**

FORT MYERS, FL – (December 19, 2013, 2:00 pm)(revised) – The Harvest Hometown Market IGA grocery store in Moore Haven closed on November 23, 2013, about a year after opening in November 2012; this was the first full-service grocery store to open in Moore Haven since the old U-Save closed in October 2011. Once again, Moore Haven residents will have to drive over 15 miles to get to the closest supermarket; once again, area residents of Glades County who do not have their own transportation will find it difficult to shop for food. The closest communities with full-service grocery stores: Clewiston, 15 miles; LaBelle, 25 miles; Okeechobee, 40 miles; Lake Placid, 43 miles.

Transportation Disadvantaged

For Moore Haven residents who cannot drive themselves, there is no public transit to take them to the closest full-service grocery store in Clewiston. Good Wheels, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit company, is the Community Transportation Coordinator for Glades and Hendry counties under the state’s Transportation Disadvantaged system; it provides paratransit door-to-door service if a person qualifies as *transportation disadvantaged*, defined as “those persons who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation and are, therefore, dependent upon others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, shopping, social activities, or other life-sustaining activities...” § 427.011(1), Fla. Stat. A Good Wheels plan to provide this paratransit service on a scheduled twice weekly basis (Tuesday morning/Thursday afternoon) between Moore Haven and the Clewiston Wal-Mart Shopping Center is being finalized for early 2014 start-up.

Good Wheels also provides service to the general public through a state-sponsored DIAL-A-RIDE program, which allows people to schedule a ride utilizing available paratransit vehicles and drivers to go anywhere within the county. In addition, Good Wheels has run a publicly funded deviated route service for the past 5 years, between Clewiston and Belle Glade. For more information on Good Wheels’ services, see www.goodwheels.org/ or call (239) 768-2900 (toll free: 800-741-1570).

Glades County Commission Chairperson Donna Storter-Long, who also serves as chairperson of the Glades-Hendry Joint Local Coordinating Board for the Transportation Disadvantaged, said that the residents of Moore Haven and the surrounding area would benefit from a regularly scheduled fixed route transit option that would provide service a couple of times a week between Moore Haven and Clewiston, as well as service to the Glades County Health Department, about two miles west of Moore Haven.

The Short History of Moore Haven's Hometown Market

In 2012, the Harvest Hometown Market was opened in Moore Haven. "We could have gone anywhere around the lake," Mr. Sweet told the Glades County Democrat in an interview published Nov. 6, 2012 (all quotes in this release are from this interview; the Sweets were not willing to comment on the market closure.) "There were a lot of stores available. But the need was here...We want an opportunity to grow, to be a service to the public, to make a difference in the community," he said. "We would like to see the community grow. We would like to be a part of that."

When planning the store, Mr. Sweet tried to consider the population, and allocate space for products the community would need. Mr. Sweet even included a special discount section in the store called the "dollar department." The dollar department had more than 1,000 items for \$1 each. "This is not something you usually see in a supermarket, but I think there is a need for it in this community," he explained. Unfortunately, the market closed November 23, 2013, about a year after opening.

When it first opened, the store employed 32 people. Mr. Sweet said he was overwhelmed by the response to their first "help wanted" ad: in an 8-hour period, over 200 people applied to work. "We interviewed them all," he said. "We wanted to give everybody an opportunity." He said some people who applied drove over from Clewiston and Okeechobee. "There are just not enough jobs to go around," he said. With the closure of the Harvest Hometown Market, there are now fewer jobs to go around.

Grocery Shopping Options for Residents of Moore Haven

- Beck's Food Store - the local Marathon fueling station/convenience store that includes a Subway.
- Ahern's BP – fueling station/convenience store that has food items, and includes Griner's, a small breakfast/lunch/deli.
- Moore Haven Dollar General store - has numerous food items, including one aisle of refrigerated products e.g. milk, eggs, cheese, lunch meats, etc.
- There is also a street-side vendor who sells fresh produce.
- Under construction: Dollar General has a larger store under construction in Moore Haven with plans to enlarge their food item offerings; Family Dollar also has a store under construction in Moore Haven.

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