



Economic Views

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SERVING CHARLOTTE, COLLIER, GLADES, HENDRY, LEE AND SARASOTA COUNTIES SINCE 1973

Project to renovate Fort Myers river district expected to be completed by July

A \$5.4 million project to renovate the downtown Fort Myers waterfront will provide the infrastructure and ambience to attract more events and a hotel — with the ultimate goal for the city to regain its once-thriving convention business.

That's what city and event officials say about the project, which is in the engineering phase now and scheduled to be completed by July. It will feature water retention ponds with fountains, landscaping that matches the streetscaping in other parts of downtown, and also pumps up the availability of water, electricity and wireless access to the Internet.

"The purpose of the basin is to attract events and retail shops, and we're in discussion with three or four companies for a hotel" to be built on what's now the Harborside Event Center parking lot, said Don Paight, executive director of the Fort Myers Redevelopment Agency.

But those are only steps on the path to bringing the convention business back to life, he said. "Up until the mid-'90s, when the Sheraton was downtown, we were hosting a lot of conventions, 22 or 23 a year by 1996," Paight said. But the Sheraton fell into disrepair, lost its brand by that hotel chain and has been closed for years. Without the hotel, Fort Myers lost its ability to attract conventions of up to 500 or 600 people, Paight said.

Sharon McAllister, director of ArtFest Fort Myers, said some of the most important changes coming are things the average festival-goer never sees. For example, she said, "There are electrical pedestals with enough amperage that we don't have to bring in a generator and have cables everywhere."

The changes will make it easier to compete for events now being held elsewhere, she said. As an event planner, "You look at their infrastructure, equipment, all those things. Is there power? Are there drains? How do I access this place?"

Jim Powell, senior estimator and project manager for Wright Construction, the project's construction manager, said it will enhance the waterfront for more casual users as well. Two water features will double as pollution abatement as they filter runoff before it flows into the Caloosahatchee, he said, and they're designed to make it a more inviting place to simply walk around.

"It's going to be quite a lovely place," Powell said. "I love to walk around downtown anyway and this is just going to enhance it for me and my family. Those people who go down there will enjoy this thing."

Source: News-Press.com, <http://www.news-press.com/article/20111114/BUSINESS/311140008/Project-renovate-Fort-Myers-river-district-expected-completed-by-July?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|Home>



Thanksgiving

<p>November 16-17, 2011 FALL FINE ART & CRAFT AT THE SPRING Warm Mineral Springs Contact: www.communityaffair.com/schedule</p> <p>November 17-18, 2011 GRAND MASTER WORLD SAND SCULPTING CHAMPIONSHIPS Fort Myers Beach Contact: (239) 463-5711</p> <p>November 18-19, 2011 GULFCOAST SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL Fort Myers Contact: (239)-218-0481</p> <p>November 19, 2011 CHARLOTTE HARBOR NATURE FESTIVAL Port Charlotte Contact: (239) 338-2550, Ext. 240 www.chnep.org</p> <p>November 19-20, 2011 SARASOTA MEDIEVAL FAIR Sarasota Contact: 1-888-303-3247</p> <p>November 21, 2011 FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS Naples Contact: (239) 434-6533</p> <p>November 22-26, 2011 CELEBRATION OF LIGHTS Naples Contact: (239) 434-6433</p> <p>November 25-December 2, 2011 FESTIVAL OF TREES Fort Myers Contact: (239) 995-2106, Ext. 247</p>	<p>November 25-December 11, 2011 FESTIVAL OF TREES AT VILLAGE ON VENETIAN BAY Naples Contact: 239-325-1765</p> <p>November 26-27, 2011 8th ANNUAL NAPLES FALL FINE ART AND CRAFT FESTIVAL Naples Contact: (239) 262-6517</p> <p>November 26, 2011 SATURDAY SWAMP WALKS Big Cypress National Preserve Contact: (239) 695-2428</p> <p>November 27, 2011 7th ANNUAL IRON JOE BONNESS TURKEY RIDE Naples Contact: (239) 810-5949</p> <p>December 1, 2011 37TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS WALK & TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY Naples Contact: (239) 692-8436</p> <p>December 2-4, 2011 SARASOTA AMERICAN CRAFT SHOW Sarasota Contact: www.sarasotacraftshow.com</p> <p>December 2, 2011 CHRISTMAS IN THE PARK LaBelle Contact: (863) 675-0125 www.labellechamber.com</p>	<p>December 3, 2011 SNOWFEST 2011 Naples Contact: (239) 252-4000 Or www.snowfestnaples.com</p> <p>December 3, 2011 FORT MYERS BEACH BOAT PARADE Fort Myers Beach Contact: (239) 454-7500</p> <p>December 9-January 1, 2012 EDISON & FORD HOLIDAY NIGHTS Fort Myers Contact: 239-334-7419 December 10-11, 2011 FISHERMEN'S VILLAGE ART & CRAFT SHOW Punta Gorda Contact: www.tnteventsinc.com</p> <p>December 11, 2011 HOLIDAY BOAT PARADE Bonita Springs Contact: (239) 495-0455</p> <p>December 15, 2011 HOLIDAY GIFTS OF FINE ART AT THE SPRING Warm Mineral Springs Contact: www.communityaffair.com</p> <p>December 17-18, 2011 DOWNTOWN SARASOTA HOLIDAY ARTS & CRAFT SHOW Sarasota Contact: www.sunsetboulevardpromotions.com</p> <p>December 18, 2011 CAPE CORAL HOLIDAY BOAT-A-LONG Cape Coral Contact: (239) 573-3213</p>
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Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council



Economic Views

SERVING CHARLOTTE, COLLIER, GLADES, HENDRY, LEE AND SARASOTA COUNTIES SINCE 1973

AIRPORT ACTIVITY

Airport passenger activity for the Southwest Florida Region decreased 16.0% in September 2011 from August 2011. Airport passengers visiting and leaving the region totaled 434,750 as compared to 517,545 in the previous month. All three airports reported a decrease in passenger activity from the previous month.

In September 2011, total airport activity for the region decreased 4.5% from the previous year. Charlotte County airport was the only one to report a decrease in passenger activity from the previous year.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The regional unemployment rate for September 2011 was 11.3%, which was lower than the revised rate of 11.5% for August 2011. Hendry County at 17.6%, had the highest unemployment rate in the six-county region, with Collier County second at 11.4%. Glades County had the lowest unemployment rate at 8.8%. The September 2011 regional unemployment rate of 11.3% was higher than the state at 10.6%. The regional unemployment rate decreased by 17.0% from September 2010 to September 2011, while the state rate decreased by 15.2% during the same time period.

AIRPORT PASSENGERS

AIRPORT					% CHANGE	
		SEPT. 11	AUG. 11	SEPT. 10	SEPT. 11	AUG. 11/ SEPT. 11
S.W. Fla. Int'l	ARRIVALS	176,719	205,345	190,439		-7.3%
	DEPARTURES	175,162	214,760	184,151		-18.4%
	ARRIVALS	36,923	41,742	37,816		-11.5%
Sarasota/ Bradenton	DEPARTURES	36,537	42,756	37,832		-14.5%
Charlotte	ARRIVALS	4,872	6,441	2,360		-24.4%
County	DEPARTURES	4,537	6,501	2,470		-30.2%
AIRPORT TOTALS = ARRIVALS + DEPARTURES						
			AUG. 11/ SEPT. 11	SEPT. 10 SEPT. 11		
S.W. Fla. Int'l		351,881	420,105	374,590		-16.2%
Sarasota/Brad.		73,460	84,498	75,648		-13.1%
Charlotte County		9,409	12,942	4,830		-27.3%
REGION		434,750	517,545	455,068		-16.0%

SOURCE: Local Airport Authorities.

LABOR FORCE FIGURES

COUNTY	LABOR FORCE		EMPLOYMENT		UNEMPLOYMENT	
	SEPT. 11 (PRELIM)	AUG. 11 (REVISED)	SEPT. 11 (PRELIM)	AUG. 11 (REVISED)	SEPT. 11 (PRELIM)	AUG. 11 (REVISED)
CHARLOTTE	68,852	68,630	61,145	60,884	7,707	7,746
COLLIER	140,024	137,041	124,066	120,670	15,958	16,371
GLADES	6,053	5,889	5,522	5,342	531	547
HENDRY	16,549	16,199	13,640	13,254	2,909	2,945
LEE	274,813	271,961	243,955	240,770	30,858	31,191
SARASOTA	160,138	159,149	142,969	141,936	17,442	17,213
REGION	666,429	658,869	591,297	582,856	75,405	76,013
STATE	9,285,000	9,255,000	8,301,000	8,242,000	984,000	1,013,000

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

COUNTY	% CHANGE*				
	SEPT. 11 (PRELIM)	AUG. 11 (REVISED)	SEPT. 10 (REVISED)	SEPT. 11 AUG. 11/SEPT. 10/	SEPT. 11 SEPT. 11
CHARLOTTE	11.2%	11.3%	13.1%	-0.5%	-14.3%
COLLIER	11.4%	11.9%	13.3%	-2.5%	-17.7%
GLADES	8.8%	9.3%	13.1%	-2.9%	-13.2%
HENDRY	17.6%	18.2%	19.9%	-1.2%	-11.5%
LEE	11.2%	11.5%	13.5%	-1.1%	-18.4%
SARASOTA	10.9%	10.8%	12.5%	1.3%	-16.0%
REGION	11.3%	11.5%	13.3%	-0.8%	-17.0%
STATE	10.6%	10.9%	12.1%	-2.9%	-15.2%

Note: Sum of detail may not equal totals due to rounding.

* Calculation of percent change is by actual revised numbers.

Source: Agency for Workforce Innovation.

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CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

The Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) for all urban consumers measures the cost of items in several specific categories and is used as an indicator of the general rate of inflation through time. The CPI-U during September 2011 increased 0.2% from August 2011. The CPI-U for September 2011 was 226.9, an increase of 3.9% from September 2010.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

GROUP	% CHANGE				
	SEPT. 11	AUG. 11	SEPT. 10	AUG. 11/ SEPT. 10/ SEPT. 11 SEPT. 11	
ALL ITEMS	226.9	226.5	218.4	0.2%	3.9%
FOOD & BEVERAGES	230.4	229.5	220.6	0.4%	4.5%
HOUSING	220.5	220.5	216.6	0.0%	1.8%
APPAREL	125.3	121.5	121.0	3.1%	3.5%
TRANSPORTATION	215.2	216.1	192.4	-0.4%	11.8%
MEDICAL CARE	401.6	400.9	390.6	0.2%	2.8%
RECREATION	113.4	113.6	113.1	-0.1%	0.3%
EDUCATION/ COMMUN.	132.6	132.0	131.2	0.5%	1.1%
OTHER GOODS/SVCS	388.6	387.1	383.7	0.4%	1.3%

Purchasing power of the consumer dollar.
 1982-1984= \$1.00 SEPT 11= 0.441
 1967= \$1.00 SEPT 11= 0.147
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor

SALES ACTIVITY

Sales activity in Southwest Florida is measured by gross and taxable sales for each county. For September 2011, gross and taxable sales in the region totaled approximately \$3.1 million and \$1.6 million, respectively. This is a 7.8% increase in gross sales and a 5.2% increase in taxable sales from September 2010. Glades County reported a decrease in gross sales and Hendry County reported a decrease in taxable sales this month as compared to the previous year.

Gross sales in the region between September 2011 and August 2011 increased 0.8%. Taxable sales decreased 3.6% during the same period. By incorporating the change in the cost of living (3.89%) and the average annual population growth rate (2.3%) for the same time period, real gross sales increased 1.5% per capita. Real taxable sales decreased 0.9%.

SALES ACTIVITY

COUNTY	% CHANGE				
	SEPT. 11 (PRELIM)	AUG. 11 (PRELIM)	SEPT. 10 (REVISED)	AUG. 11/ SEPT. 11	SEPT. 2010/ SEPT. 2011
CHARLOTTE	245,170	251,529	237,558	-2.5%	3.2%
COLLIER	709,301	701,619	682,340	1.1%	4.0%
GLADES	5,689	5,589	7,040	1.8%	-19.2%
HENDRY	85,721	80,727	71,240	6.2%	20.3%
LEE	1,215,887	1,228,174	1,085,700	-1.0%	12.0%
SARASOTA	866,444	835,106	818,573	3.8%	5.8%
REGION	3,128,212	3,102,744	2,902,452	0.8%	7.8%

TAXABLE SALES (\$000)

COUNTY	% CHANGE				
	SEPT. 11 (PRELIM)	AUG. 11 (PRELIM)	SEPT. 10 (REVISED)	AUG. 11/ SEPT. 11	SEPT. 2010/ SEPT. 2011
CHARLOTTE	128,004	134,540	127,352	-4.9%	0.5%
COLLIER	372,302	405,615	345,091	-8.2%	7.9%
GLADES	2,199	1,741	1,864	26.3%	18.0%
HENDRY	18,273	17,457	18,931	4.7%	-3.5%
LEE	673,078	684,449	634,124	-1.7%	6.1%
SARASOTA	407,966	417,929	395,414	-2.4%	3.2%
REGION	1,601,822	1,661,731	1,522,777	-3.6%	5.2%

SOURCE: Florida Department of Tax Research.

LEPC INFORMATION

For information on upcoming LEPC Courses and Training, please contact John Gibbons at jgibbons@swfrpc.org.

SWFRPC MEETING SCHEDULE

Regional Planning Council	Third Thursday of each month
Lee County MPO	Monthly
Technical Advisory Committee	Monthly
Citizen Advisory Committee	Monthly
CEDS Committee	Quarterly
LEPC	Quarterly
Disaster Preparedness	Thursday after LEPC meeting
Lee Trans. Disadvantaged	Quarterly
Glades/Hendry Trans. Disadvantaged	Quarterly
Brownfields Committee	Quarterly

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BUILDING PERMITS

Residential building activity is measured by the number of single-family and multi-family building permits issued during a given month. In September 2011, 251 residential permits were issued in Southwest Florida. This is 37 more permits than were issued in September 2010. The number of units covered by these permits increased by 91 from 268 in September 2010 to 359 in September 2011. Compared with the figures reported for August 2011, the number of units for September 2011 increased by 77. From August 2011 to September 2011, permits issued increased by 23.

The region reported a residential building valuation of \$77,358,794, in September 2011. This is an increase of 45.1% compared to the valuation of residential permits issued in September 2010, which totaled \$53,329,091.

BUILDING PERMIT ACTIVITY

COUNTY	SEPTEMBER 2011*				AUGUST 2011**			
	SINGLE FAMILY	MULTI-FAMILY PERMITS	RESIDENTIAL UNITS	RESIDENTIAL VALUE	SINGLE FAMILY	MULTI-FAMILY PERMITS	RESIDENTIAL UNITS	RESIDENTIAL VALUE
CHARLOTTE	25	0	0	\$6,229,875	7	0	0	\$4,802,430
COLLIER	65	4	32	\$25,362,081	64	6	36	\$34,228,621
GLADES	0	0	0	\$0	0	0	0	\$129,000
HENDRY	0	0	0	\$0	0	0	0	\$0
LEE	95	4	84	\$27,851,192	90	4	12	\$32,792,471
SARASOTA	58	0	0	\$17,915,646	55	2	18	\$17,799,976
REGION*	243	8	116	\$77,358,794	216	12	66	\$89,752,498
COUNTY	SEPTEMBER 2010***				UNIT CHANGE		% CHANGE OF VALUE	
	SINGLE FAMILY	MULTI-FAMILY PERMITS	RESIDENTIAL UNITS	RESIDENTIAL VALUE	AUG. 11/ SEPT. 11	SEPT. 10/ SEPT. 11	SEPT. 10/ SEPT. 11	SEPT. 10/ SEPT. 11
CHARLOTTE	24	19	31	\$5,674,667	18	-30	29.7%	9.8%
COLLIER	49	3	22	\$18,401,250	-3	26	-25.9%	37.8%
GLADES	1	0	0	\$165,842	0	-1	-100.0%	n/a
HENDRY	1	0	0	\$176,238	0	-1	n/a	n/a
LEE	68	0	0	\$11,732,759	77	111	-15.1%	137.4%
SARASOTA	46	3	26	\$17,178,335	-15	-14	0.6%	4.3%
REGION*	189	25	79	\$53,329,091	77	91	-13.8%	45.1%

* Data does not include Everglades City, Hendry County & LaBelle for September 2011

***All data is reported for September 2010.

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SUMMARY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

INDICATORS	SEPTEMBER 2011	SEPTEMBER 2010	% CHANGE
	(PRELIM)	(REVISED)	
UNEMPLOYMENT			
State	10.6%	12.1%	-15.2%
Region	11.3%	13.3%	-17.0%
County			
Charlotte	11.2%	13.1%	-14.3%
Collier	11.4%	13.3%	-17.7%
Glades	8.8%	13.1%	-13.2%
Hendry	17.6%	19.9%	-11.5%
Lee	11.2%	13.5%	-18.4%
Sarasota	10.9%	12.5%	-16.0%
LABOR FORCE			
State	9,285,000	3,288,000	182.4%
Region	666,429	673,465	-1.0%
EMPLOYED			
State	8,301,000	8,168,000	1.6%
Region	591,297	583,652	1.3%
UNEMPLOYED			
State	984,000	1,120,000	-12.1%
Region	75,405	89,813	-16.0%
AIRPORT PASSENGERS			
Region	434,750	455,068	-4.5%
S. W. Int'l Airport	351,881	374,590	-6.1%
Sarasota/Bradenton	73,460	75,648	-2.9%
Naples	9,409	4,830	94.8%
BUILDING PERMITS			
Regional	16	214	-92.5%
Single Family	16	189	-91.5%
Multi-Family	0	25	-100.0%
TOTAL VALUE			
Residential	\$73,660,248	\$58,890,439	25.1%
All Permit Activity	\$150,444,489	\$159,559,967	-5.7%
REGIONAL SALES (\$000)			
Taxable Sales	\$1,601,822	\$1,522,777	5.2%
Gross Sales	\$3,128,212	\$2,902,452	7.8%
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX			
	226.9	218.4	3.9%
PRIME INTEREST RATE			
		3.25%	-100.0%

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

