

This news bulletin is designed to keep you informed of recent developments in Pasco County Florida, a community of more than 470,000 people in the Tampa Bay Region.

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### COUNTY ADMINISTRATION RECOGNIZED FOR EFFECTIVE AND INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

National Association of Counties (NACO) has awarded Pasco County a 2010 Achievement Award for its LEAP Into Excellence and Bringing Opportunities Home initiatives. The awards program recognizes “effective and innovative programs” which contribute to and enhance county government in the U.S.

The annual Achievement Award Program was created to identify effective and creative county government programs in a number of categories, including county administration, emergency management, environmental protection and health and human services. Pasco County was recognized in the county administration category.

Pasco began its LEAP Into Excellence initiative in the fall of 2007 to improve service to citizens, increase efficiency and reduce expenditures. Bringing Opportunities Home is the subsequent community outreach campaign that has engaged hundreds of Pasco residents and county employees in an effort to achieve excellence in government.

To date, the LEAP initiative has saved millions in taxpayer dollars through innovative process improvements. The community outreach effort included focus groups, citizen surveys and stakeholder meetings, as well as articles in the local media, programming on Pasco Television and material distributed in county parks and libraries. The LEAP initiative ultimately resulted in the adoption of the county’s first three-year Strategic Plan, Business Plan and Mission, Vision and Values statements.

The success of the LEAP initiative is critical to economic development of the County, because speed-to-market is a major factor when companies make decisions about where to invest. Recently, the LEAP program has been paying big dividends in this regard, and Pasco Economic Development Council, Inc. has noted increasingly positive comments from businesses and developers about “New Pasco” and the changing business climate in the County.

Pasco County Board of County Commissioners and staff are to be congratulated for their hard work and award winning efforts to help make Pasco County the “Community of Choice” for Tampa Bay citizens, visitors and businesses.

NACO is a 75-year-old organization that represents more than 2,000 counties in the U.S. For more information on the LEAP Into Excellence and Bringing Opportunities Home initiatives, contact Michele Baker at (727)847-8115. For more information on the National Association of Counties, visit [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org).

*Source: Pasco County*

### CERTIFIED SITES PROGRAM BECOMES A TOP PRIORITY FOR PEDC

Pasco Economic Development Council, Inc. (PEDC) is developing a certified—or shovel-ready—sites program. Demand for project-ready sites has become one of the fastest growing trends in the site location business.

Companies continue to put pressure on the time allowed for making a location decision as well as the time required to start construction and complete the project. The location decision process demands available sites that are ready for industrial, office and/or technology users. Companies looking to build new facilities want sites that are ready to go, reasonably priced, and risk-free.

Objectives of the certified sites program are to assist the County in meeting their job creation goals; provide a county-wide inventory of sites; provide prospects with comprehensive and trustworthy site data; reduce the risk associated with development by providing detailed information about a site including price and availability, utilities, access, environmental concerns, and potential site development costs; assist the County in determining the marketability of existing and proposed sites; certify sites that are ready for industrial, office and/or technology users; and make all site certification information available on the internet for immediate access by prospective companies and clients.

“There has been an increasing trend among economic developers around the country to promote “shovel ready” sites,” said John Hagen, Pasco Economic Development Council President/CEO. However, there is no national yardstick to ensure quality and consistency, so the term has been reduced to little more than a marketing slogan. We are dedicated to providing not only a list of features for each site in the County, but—and this is critical—the backup data to provide a high level of assurance for our customers.”

The program is being tested on several sites to work out any final kinks with rollout planned for September; eventually PEDC hopes to have every significant office, industrial, and technology site in the County in the certification program.

For more information about the Certified Sites Program, contact John Hagen at (813)926-0827 or via email [jhagen@pascoedc.com](mailto:jhagen@pascoedc.com).

### **BUSINESS GROWTH CONFERENCES BENEFIT AREA BUSINESS OWNERS AND ENTREPRENEURS**

More than three dozen people took advantage of the free growth conference at the Land O’ Lakes branch library on Wednesday, May 26, 2010. The conference, hosted by the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at University of South Florida (USF) was held in honor of Small Business Week.

Several similar conferences were held in the Tampa Bay Region, but the Pasco County conference far surpassed the attendance at other counties. Recently, PEDC and other County organizations have been working more closely together to help small businesses. The SBDC conference was promoted through this informal network and was credited with driving up attendance by 100% over projections.

The free growth conferences, which were sponsored by the Small Business Administration, provided local business owners and entrepreneurs with information on ways to grow their business.

The conferences were taught by SBDC Certified Business Analysts and covered the following topics: Certifications for Growth, Growing Globally, Marketing for Growth, Grow via Electronic Media and Financing Growth.

“We would like to hold more of these conferences,” said John Hagen, President/CEO, Pasco Economic Development Council. “As we dig ourselves out of the present recession, small businesses will lead the way. We want to do anything we can to help them. Teaming up with the SBDC, the Workforce Board, the Library, and the Chambers in Pasco County is a great way to stretch resources and reach out to businesses who need help.”

The SBDC also offers monthly classes on those same topics at its main office located in Tampa, as well as its regional offices in Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Highlands, and Sarasota counties. For more information, including office locations and a list of classes, please visit: [www.sbdctampabay.com](http://www.sbdctampabay.com).

### **FLY ME TAMPA BAY: A COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY EFFORT**

Tampa International Airport is making an effort to attract more nonstop flights—both domestically and internationally—to Tampa Bay. The goal of this effort is to engage communities to share information that will help grow the destinations directly served by Tampa International Airport.

Better access offers more opportunities for the people who live and work in Tampa Bay. More flights mean more jobs for our region. The more information we can share on the demand for flights in our region the more attractive we

become to airlines that can serve our needs.

The data collected from a survey will be used for developing air service marketing strategies. The survey's first phase, which will run through the summer, is to identify opportunities and community support to generate and market new initiatives for Tampa International Airport. It will ask for information from individuals and the top 1,000 businesses in the seven-county region. In later phases, it will include focus groups and an outreach effort to smaller businesses that travel consistently – both international and domestic destinations.

“We have a major stake in Tampa International Airport, said John Hagen, PEDC President/CEO. As it grows, there is no doubt that its growth will spill into Pasco County. Just the number of business people flying to China right now on a monthly basis is quite impressive. We want to make it ever easier for our businesses, prospective businesses and prospective tourists to connect with the rest of the world.

“We're all in this together and need your help. Please visit [www.flymetampabay.com](http://www.flymetampabay.com) to participate in the survey.”

*Source: FlyMeTampaBay.com and Tampa International Press Release*

## **PASCO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC.; A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP**

PEDC is an organization that promotes countywide economic development. Created in 1987 by a group of dedicated business and community leaders, it continues to be a strong partnership funded by corporate and public investors and focused on the economic vitality of Pasco County.

*If you have any questions or comments about the contents of this newsletter, please contact PEDC at (813)920-6480 or [cdearolf@pascoedc.com](mailto:cdearolf@pascoedc.com).*

